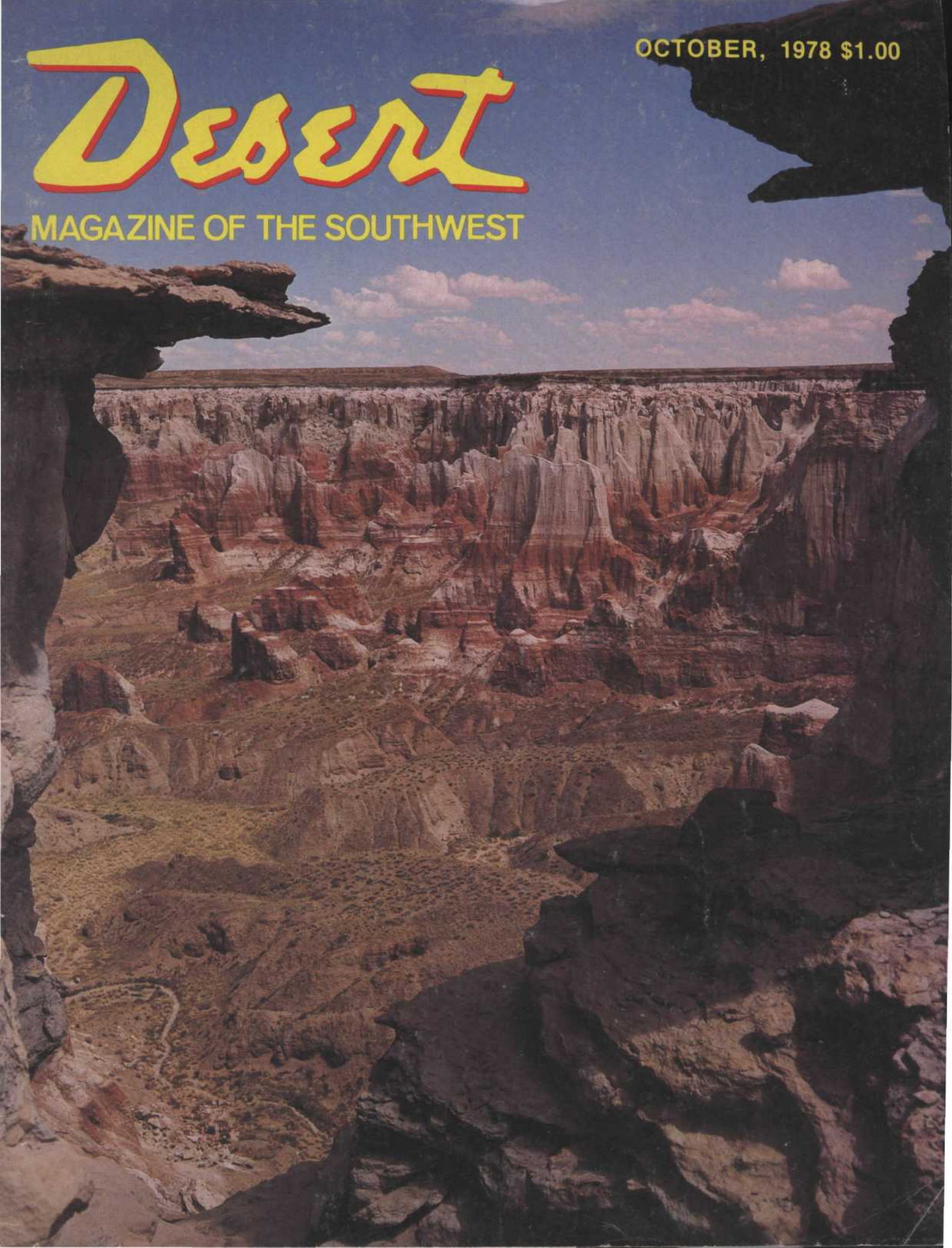


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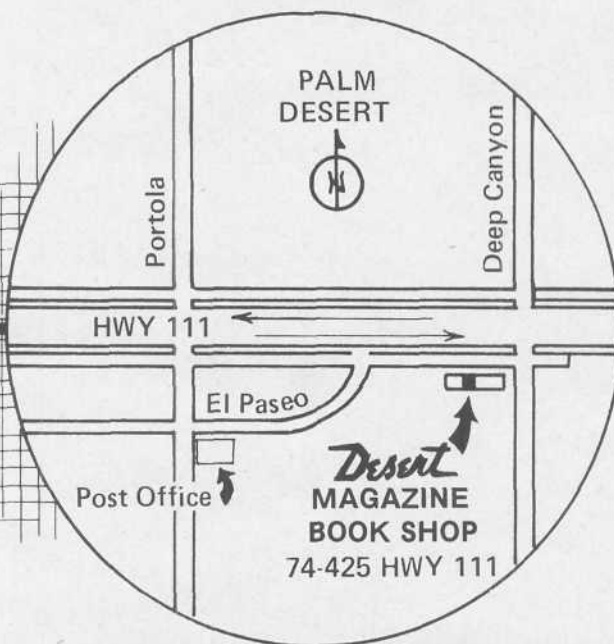
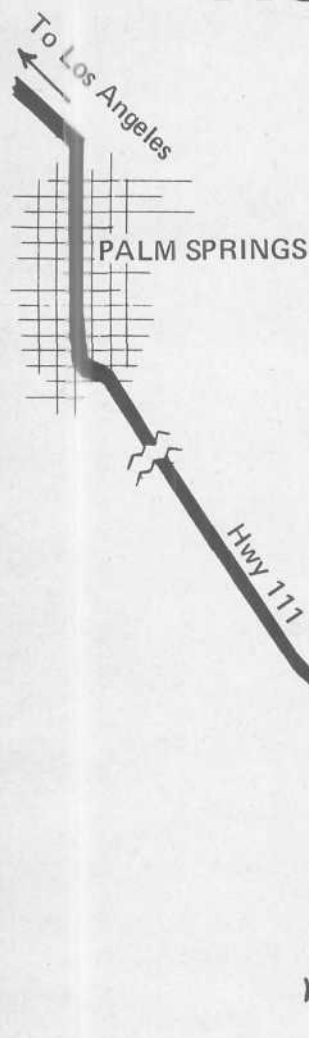
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Desert
MAGAZINE

Volume 41, Number 10

OCTOBER 1978

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THE COVER:

Natural Window in Ha-He-No-Geh Canyon, Navajo Indian Reservation, Arizona. A break-off from the Moenkopi Plateau where erosion has had free play among the Dakota sandstone formation (white) and interspersed by red siltstone strata. Photo by Josef Muench, Santa Barbara, California.

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EDITORIAL, CIRCULATION AND ADVERTISING OFFICES: 74-425 Highway 111, P. O. Box 1318, Palm Desert, California 92260. Telephone Area Code 714 346-8144. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: United States and possessions; 1 year, \$8.00; 2 years, \$15.00; 3 years, \$22.00. All other countries add \$2.00 U. S. currency for each year. See Subscription Order Form in this issue. Allow five weeks for change of address and send both new and

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A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

WHAT'S A whole bunch of fun for the entire family that occurs every October and lasts for two action-packed days? You're right! The Prospector's Club of Southern California's annual National Prospectors and Treasure Hunters Convention. If you like coin shooting, drywashing, gold panning, dowsing, and are interested in all facets of the treasure hunting field, this is a *must* event. This Eleventh Convention is being held October 7th & 8th at Galileo Park, near California City, California. Thousands of dollars in prizes and trophies will be waiting for the lucky winners of many categories of events.

Great camping facilities are available with restrooms, showers and water for only \$6.00 for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Noted guests and treasure hunting personalities will be present, plus the latest equipment will be displayed and demonstrated. Add planned activities for the children, free parking, free admission and you get a packaged weekend that's hard to beat. See you there!

Another fun event to put on your list is the 22nd annual Brawley Cattle Call, an old-fashioned Western-style celebration paying tribute to the cattle industry of Southern California's Imperial Valley, which will be held the week of November 5-12. Brawley is located along State Highway 86 just south of the Salton Sea. Events will include a two-hour parade, a Mexican fiesta, beef cookoff, bluegrass concert and other activities in addition to rodeo performances on Saturday and Sunday, November 11 & 12. More than 100 of the top cowboys in the West have registered for this Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association-sanctioned event. It should be a whopper!

William Kuyper

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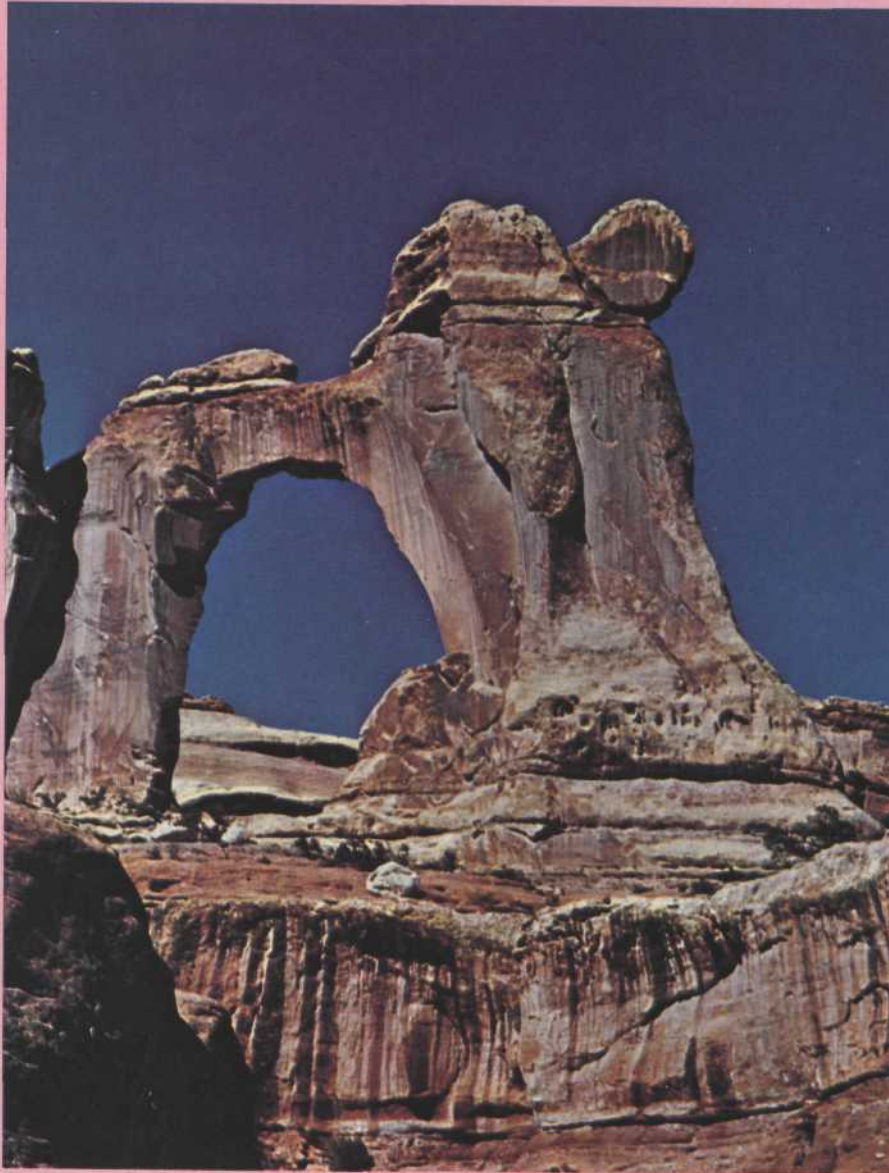
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Mystery of the Spiral Staircase

by RICHARD BAUMAN

DID THE power of prayer bring about a miracle in a small church in Santa Fe, New Mexico? Or did a fantastic number of coincidences come together to produce the most unique bit of construction you'll find anywhere?

The "miracle" is a spiral staircase in the Chapel of Our Lady of Light, that just shouldn't be. Architects and engineers have studied these in minute detail and say there's no reasonable explanation for the staircase to be standing. In fact, many claim it should have crashed into a heap of splintered wood the first time anyone tried to use it.

It didn't though, and in fact, it never had a shaky day during its 85 years of daily use. It's as sturdy today as when completed in 1874. The only reason it isn't in use today is to insure its preservation.

Why is it such an unusual spiral staircase? For several reasons. How it came to be built, why it "works," the materials and techniques of construction, and perhaps strangest of all, the old carpenter who created it.

The remarkable spiral staircase in the Chapel of Our Lady of Light in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Its builder is unknown, as is the origin of the wood, and why it works even though it lacks any visible means of support.

In 1872, Bishop Lamy, of Santa Fe, contracted to have the chapel built for the Sisters of Loretto. He'd brought them to that city to start a school for girls. Lamy wanted the chapel to be a small replica of the *Sainte-Chapelle* in Paris.

The original plans for the chapel included a choir loft 20 feet high. Unfortunately, as the chapel neared completion, the architect who designed it was murdered, and only then was his colossal blunder discovered. The chapel is small, about 25 feet by 60 feet, but the designer had omitted stairs to the loft from his drawings.

Numerous other architects were consulted but it was their collective opinions that a set of stairs to the loft was impossible. Because of the chapel's size, they reported to the Bishop, a staircase would take up too much room and make the tiny church unusable.

Distressed by the news, but not discouraged, the nuns decided to pray for an answer to the problem. For nine days they prayed to St. Joseph, the carpenter saint, seeking his help in solving the problem.

They weren't to be disappointed, nor did they have to wait long for their prayers to be answered. The day after completing the novena an old man knocked on the convent door. He was shabby looking and the burro that carried his tool box and belongings looked terribly underfed. The coarse-bearded old-timer didn't bother with formalities. He told the nun who answered the door that he'd heard they needed some stairs built and that he could do the job.

Mother Mary Magdeline, the nun in charge, showed him the virtually completed chapel. He said he'd start that day, and didn't want to be disturbed while he worked. He told her he was going to lock the chapel until the job was done.

It wasn't until almost three months later that he allowed anyone to view his work.

The most striking thing about this staircase even today is it lacks any visible means of support. Spiral staircases gather no strength or stability from themselves. They require some sort of external support, either a centerpole to wind around, a wall to cling to, or support from underneath. This one has none of these.

*The Chapel
of our Lady of Light
is small and could
not accommodate
a conventional
staircase.*

It is connected to the loft, but this offers no stability nor strength. In theory, it is impossible to use this staircase. Yet it was used, and for some unknown reason it has stayed in place.

Still, there's more mystery to this staircase than why it hasn't collapsed. The old carpenter did a remarkable job in several ways. For instance, there isn't a nail or screw in it. Where connections have been made such as the steps being attached to the stringers, wooden dowels were used.

The two stringers to which the 33 steps are attached are in fact remarkable works of construction. They are perfectly matched spirals. It's suspected he warped the wood into shape, which is logical. Yet it remains a mystery as to how he was able to form them so as to get the inside and outside stringers to match perfectly.

The outside one is necessarily longer, while the inside stringer had to be twisted into much tighter radii, yet when the steps were put on they matched the

outside one exactly.

Amazingly, the stringers aren't just long pieces of wood bent to the precise dimensions. Instead, they're made up of several short sections that were spliced together. Yet to the unaided and untrained eye, the joints are invisible.

One can only imagine what would be involved in building such a staircase today, if it were possible. A half dozen carpenters, an engineer or two, sophisticated measuring devices, and power tools would be used.

This carpenter, though, according to the diary kept by Mother Magdeline, had only a couple of hammers, an ancient-looking and unusual saw, a T-square and perhaps a chisel or two. Nevertheless, he managed to build, with unbelievable precision, this spiral staircase.

The mystery grows deeper though when the wood he used is examined. It is hardwood, unknown in New Mexico and



Continued on Page 46



A common use for old railroad ties and trestle timbers is illustrated at the old Rasor cattle ranch southwest of Baker in the Mojave Desert. Sheds, corrals, fences, even housing in remote areas depend on such abandoned timber resources.

Historic Bonanza Railroads Still Useful In Desert Areas Tracks Become Highways, Ties Turn Into Houses, Fence Posts

by **BILL JENNINGS**

THEIR GLORY days as transportation links between desert mining areas and civilization are long gone but more than a dozen abandoned shortline railroads in the California, Arizona and Nevada desert still perform a useful function or two.

Perhaps the most common use of the old lines, from the Comstock Lode south to Yuma, and from Oatman west to Victorville, is as roadbed for the highways that, ironically, sealed the fate of the rail carriers.

The irony perhaps is lost on regional

historians, however, because some of the railroads had previously plowed up the dim trails of the pioneer settlers of the same region. One line, still in existence, the Phoenix Cutoff of the Santa Fe, covers Paulino Weaver's obscure trail to the Colorado River for some 25 miles west from Parker, Arizona, to Rice, California.

Another route used successively by freighting wagons, steel-wheeled ore gondola cars and now 18-wheeled 40-ton dump trucks was the portion of the old Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad from Silver Lake south to Baker, on Interstate 15. This 10-mile stretch bypassed the Silver Lake playa during floodtime.

Perhaps the longest railroad cum highway line in heavy use today is the route of U.S. Highway 95 from Las Vegas northwesterly to Beatty, along the 1918-abandoned Las Vegas — & Tonopah Railroad, a 125-mile ore-carrying line that was obsolete before its completion. The Rhyolite boom busted before the trains got there!

The Nevada Highway Commission bought the abandoned embankments, streambed trestles and cuts of the LV&T for just under \$4000!, as compared to a total construction cost for the railroad in 1906 of well over \$1 million. The state did the work in 1919, just after abandon-

Young visitor sits on rock and concrete abutment of former Picacho narrow gauge railway trestle, fading remnants of early Colorado River gold mining camp 25 miles northwest of Yuma. Timbers went into home construction.

ment. An additional 15 miles of the present state highway from Beatty north toward Goldfield and Tonopah also is former rail right-of-way, that of the ill-fated Bullfrog-Goldfield through the upper Amargosa River gorge.

The BG was also a product of the post-Tonopah and Goldfield mining boom period, when it appeared that Rhyolite, five miles west of Beatty, was going to produce an even bigger bonanza of gold and/or silver ore than either of the more famous camps to the north. The million-dollar BG line was started from Goldfield south in mid-1906.

Perhaps more important than the highway line it fathered, the BG was partially responsible for one of the most colorful episodes in Death Valley history, the building of Death Valley Scotty's million-dollar castle in lower Grapevine Canyon.

Scotty—nobody used his first name, Walter—and his financial backer, A. M. Johnson, a Chicago insurance mogul,



used the BG to haul hundreds of carloads of cement, steel, lumber and other building materials from the handy siding of Bonnie Claire before the railroad was abandoned in 1928.

After the trackage closed down, Scotty

Not yet a genuine relic of mining history, these wrecked iron-ore cars at the Red Cloud summit siding of the Kaiser Steel Corporation's Flying Eagle Railroad illustrate the changing and temporary status of man's impact on the desert. Scene is 15 miles southwest of Desert Center in Riverside County.



added the final touch, contracting to buy several thousand ties for firewood and construction purposes. In fact, he bought so many that the storage arroyo became known as Tie Canyon.

Only problem, according to legend, is that the BG had invested in creosoted ties, one of the few desert railroads to indulge in that extravagance. When Scotty and the Johnsons tried to light the first one up in their ornate fireplace, it nearly blew up the house. Creosote, in addition to being a good wood preservative and bug preventative, adds magically to the combustibility of the timber. What with the acrid smoke, the incredible heat and the unforgettable smell of the burning oil, the newly completed home nearly became the most expensive campfire in the history of Death Valley.

Needless to say, many of the ties were still left in Tie Canyon a few years back. The Johnsons realized a part of their considerable investment, however, by reselling the ties to ranchers as fence posts and building timbers.

The most enduring legacy of the Tonopah & Tidewater and its parent, the Pacific Coast Borax Co., is found in the structures of Death Valley Junction, the town spawned by the junction of the standard-gauge T&T and its borax-haul-

ing baby brother, the Death Valley Railroad. The DVR connected the junction with several of the major borax mines, particularly in the region of Ryan in upper Furnace Creek Canyon.

The old borax company headquarters, also operating center for the 1907-1939 railroad, is now a hotel and informal museum for Death Valley visitors while Ryan still serves now and then as overflow housing for tourists when facilities at Furnace Creek are at capacity.

Not all the bonanza railroads are abandoned, nor are all of them concentrated in the Death Valley area.

Two are still active carriers, albeit hauling much more mundane cargo than gold and silver ore, or even borax concentrates. One, the 25-mile Trona Railway, in fact is expanding, adding a new terminal and shipping point near the Pinnacles at the south end of Searles Dry Lake currently. The Trona still runs a daily freight round trip, connecting with the Southern Pacific's Jawbone branch at Searles Junction, hauling several thousand tons of Searles Lake chemicals and minerals a trip.

The other active line is the narrow-gauge Plaster City Railway, in Imperial County, also about 25 miles long, connecting a major gypsum mill at Plaster



City with an open-pit quarry in the Fish Creek Mountains, adjacent to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Both lines are now dieselized and decline to carry passengers.

At one time, however, the Plaster City line carried passengers to and from the mine in a pair of high-powered sedans welded together back-to-back and mounted on steel wheels. The big Chryslers could make more than 60 miles an hour on the steel rails just three feet apart and it was a special thrill to barrel down the arrow-straight line.

The Trona operated the last railcar school bus in California, carrying high school students to a connection with San Bernardino County school buses at the junction. The old railcar later was sold to the California Western at Ft. Bragg and until recently was one member of a select family of cars known collectively as the "Skunks," for their distinctive exhaust smells.

Also operated in the southern desert was a lonesome five-mile carrier at Pica-cho, now a state recreation area on the Colorado River on the California side a few miles north of Yuma. The old road-bed for this narrow-gauge gold ore carrier—from the Picacho mine down to the mill on the river—was converted more than a half-century ago to wagon use and

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THE SOUTHWESTERN INDIAN DETOURS

by D. H. Thomas





Now closed, the Trails End tavern was the last public establishment in remote Kelso, midway between Barstow and Las Vegas on the old San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake Railway, now Union Pacific. Kelso formerly was a busy helper-engine terminal at the foot of Cima Hill.

found the bricks) was on the North Indian Avenue at what is now called Garnet.

And that outlines the problem of finding the old railroad lines. Most of them just didn't run where you thought they did. For example, don't try getting to Tonopah on the Tonopah & Tidewater, as one writer implied you could fairly recently. As close as you could get was Gold Center (where?), a now forgotten camp just south of Beatty.

Bonanza railroad names, just as the camps they served so long ago, had a tendency to be a little optimistic, you see.

Other rail lines long abandoned or re-routed that still provide roadway or other uses for desert residents and visitors included:

now is a popular recreational trail for off-road vehicle enthusiasts in the remote and historic state park and national wildlife refuge at Picacho.

The most bizarre use of former rail facilities until very recent years was a private airport on a cattle ranch at Rasor, just south of Soda Lake, some 15 miles from Baker. The old right-of-way of the Tonopah & Tidewater made a perfect, if narrow runway for light planes used by the rancher.

Collectors of date nails, old bricks, bottles and rail spikes pretty well have cleaned out the old rail lines, stations and camps of their treasures, but it is still possible to find a bonanza of your own out there.

For example, the writer found more than a dozen eroded but still useful bricks recently at the abandoned Palm Springs station site on the still-active Southern Pacific mainline. I figure the bricks had been used to circle ornamental palm trees installed well before the turn of the century and thus can be 100 years old.

Before you rush to the Palm Springs station site at Windy Point on State Highway 111 three miles southwest of the Interstate 10 junction, pause. The original Palm Springs station, from about 1880 until the mid-1920s, (where I

The Nevada Southern, from Coffey north to Ivanpah in eastern San Bernardino County, built in 1893. A county road from Lanfair Valley through Vanderbilt to Interstate 15 near Nipton is on the old line.

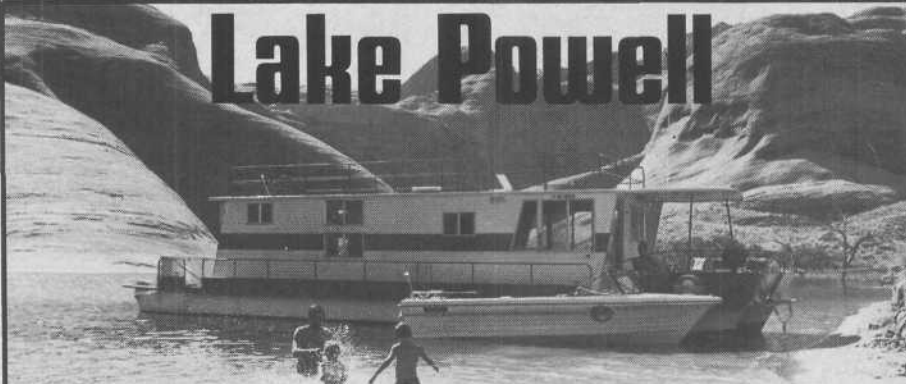
San Diego & Arizona Eastern, abandoned only two years ago after major flood damage. The California State Park System hopes to use old watering facilities, trestles, tunnels and roadbed as trails, campgrounds and other attractions for Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

The Randsburg Railroad, from Four Corners, or Kramer Junction, north to Red Mountain, the roadbed for U.S. Highway 395.

Atlantic & Pacific Railroad, predecessor of the Santa Fe from Needles west to Barstow, an old steel bridge across the Colorado River at Topock now carries a natural gas line instead of trains.

Mohave & Milltown, Arizona shortline connecting mines in the vicinity of Gold Road and Oatman to milling sites on the Colorado River east of Needles. The old right-of-way is now part of a pattern of off-road vehicle routes in the rugged Black and Chemehuevi Mountains. □

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BAJA CALIFOR

BAJA CALIFORNIA, Mexico's 1000-mile-long finger of land which juts south from the international border, used to be called "The Forgotten Peninsula." Today, with the transpeninsula highway running the complete length from Tijuana to Cabo San Lucas, Baja California is no longer forgotten. Thousands of automobile-oriented tourists pour down the desert peninsula seeking "fun in the sun." Others, with less time to spare, zoom in by air to visit the luxury spas that their more pedestrian fellows either can't afford or are unable to reach by car. In brief, it's getting more and more difficult to experience the isolation and feeling of adventure which once made Baja so appealing.

When Marvin and Aletha Patchen invited Jean and me to join them on a canoe voyage down Baja California's remote eastern coastline we accepted with instant enthusiasm. Here was a golden opportunity to explore a region of the Mexican peninsula which had long been inaccessible to us. Would we consider going? You can bet your sweet life we would.

Jean and I aren't Johnny-come-latelies to Mexico's Lower California. Over the years we have walked it, driven it and flown over it (*Desert Magazine*, October, November 1974, "We Walked A Mission Trail"). Snooping into Baja's hidden corners has become a way of life for us. The thought of canoeing down the Gulf of California coastline was inspirational and we were ready.

Several months passed, however, before the time was right and our equipment was ready. Marvin had put a great amount of planning and research into the venture. There were a hundred details to be attended to before our expedition could get under way.

A few weeks prior to the canoe trip it was decided to reconnoiter the gulf coast by air. On a two-day flight in the Patchens' airplane we flew some 600 miles down the gulf shore to the town of Loreto. For most of the air trip we maintained an altitude of about 500 feet. This allowed us to make careful notes of any coastal features which might affect the

canoe venture. The air reconnaissance was later to prove invaluable on the sea voyage.

Our twin 20-foot canoes were aluminum Grumman's, fastened together, catamaran-style, by two aluminum cross bars which made them exceptionally stable. Each canoe was powered by a Volvo 8½-horsepower outboard motor. The two boats could be separated and used independently in the event of severe damage to either one. Spray covers were tailored to fit between the two canoes and cover the midships. This helped to keep the gear reasonably dry

although occasionally, when the wind kicked up spume and spray, Jean and Aletha, in their vulnerable bow positions, were drenched with sea water.

Each canoe carried about 1,000 pounds which included equipment, fuel, water, outboard motors and passenger weight. We started with 55 gallons of water and 20 gallons of gasoline and this gave us a safe margin between known points of supply. Gasoline consumption worked out to about 12 miles per gallon at an average speed of six to seven miles per hour. We figured our water needs at one gallon per person per day. The

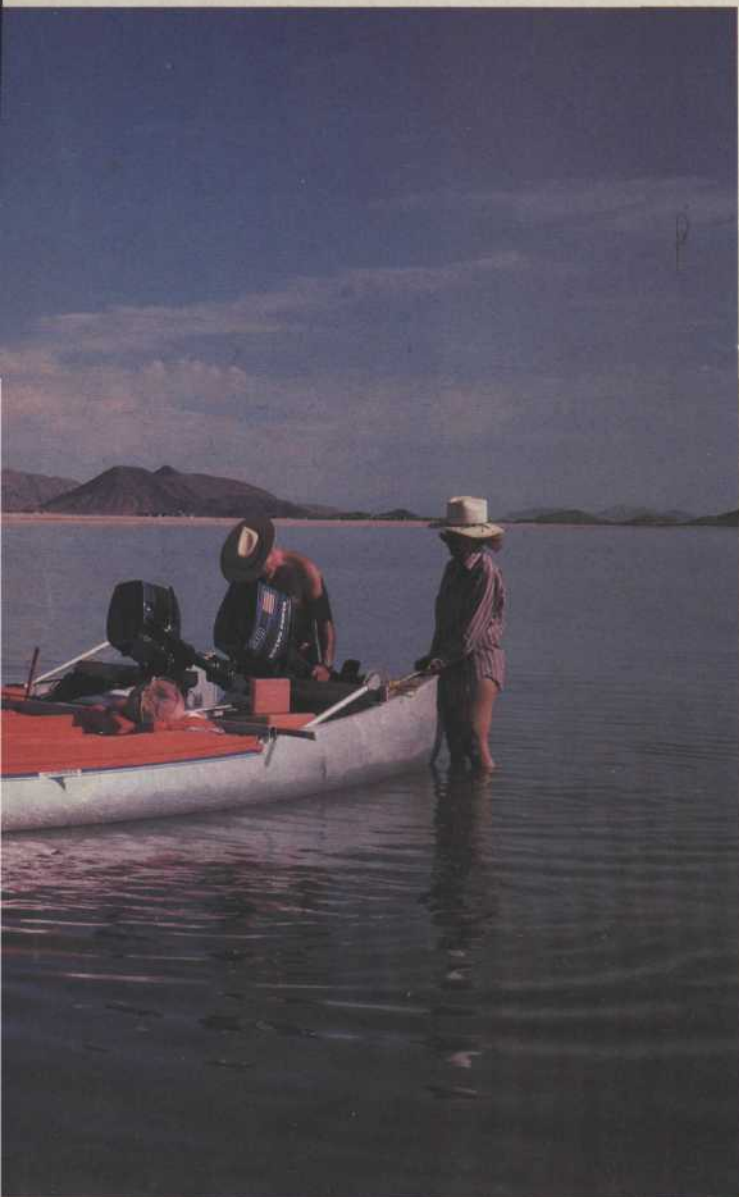


NIA BY CANOE!

by **GEORGE W. LEETCH**

TWO ADVENTUROUS COUPLES EXPLORE THE REMOTE EASTERN COASTLINE OF BAJA CALIFORNIA WITH CANOES.

The silver canoes with their bright orange canopy provide a contrast to the tranquil blue waters of the Gulf of California.



amount and kind of food took some careful consideration and we carried enough to last us for two weeks, at which time it was estimated we would be in a position to purchase fresh supplies. We hoped, of course, to supplement our diet with sea food.

Finally we were ready as we ever would be and D-Day was at hand. Puertecitos, 50 miles south of San Felipe, on the Gulf of California, was our embarkation point. From there, friends would drive our car back home to Borrego Springs and we would head our canoes south on the sea lanes to high adventure.

Just exactly how far we were going and how long it would take was still undecided. We gave ourselves a month and the distance traveled was not of major importance. Our principal interest was to explore the remote gulf coastline of Baja California, investigate secluded bays and coves and hike into palm tree canyons which could be reached only by foot.

Strong winds delayed our departure from Puertecitos Bay for a day and we took advantage of the time by doing a practice drill of loading and unloading the canoes and portaging them back and

forth to the water's edge. The exercise of loading and unloading the equipment and canoes and hauling them to a safe, high tide line was later to prove the biggest chore of the trip.

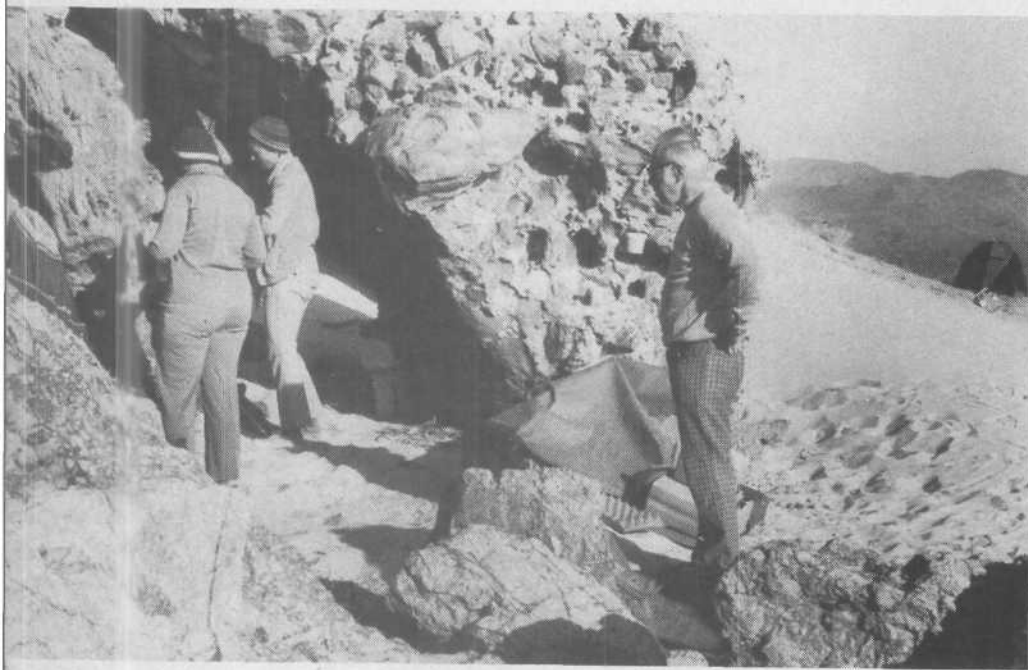
The sea was calm on the following morning so we loaded our gear, cranked one of the motors into life and pointed the bows of the canoes south with ill-concealed excitement. This was it! This was the big one! Somehow I felt that Marvin, as unofficial captain of the expedition, should announce in brisk, nautical voice, "This is not a practice run. All hands man their stations." Actually, our leave taking seemed to cause scarcely a ripple of interest from the casual loungers on the beach. I really wasn't expecting confetti and the village band playing a fond farewell but surely it wasn't every day that a group like ours sailed from Puertecitos on such an adventure. But then, maybe Cortez faced the same public apathy when he set out to explore the New World.

The sea run, that first day out, proved to be the longest of the entire trip. Everything was interesting and noteworthy. Baja California's rugged coastline slipped by in an ever-changing procession of scenery. Chocolate-colored lava cliffs were interspersed with gleaming sandy beaches and rocky coves. It was a temptation to visit every interesting bay and jutting promontory. We covered the 47 miles to Bahia San Luis Gonzaga in eight hours and beached the boats at Alfonsina's fish camp by mid-afternoon. Gasoline was available there and we replaced the four gallons which had been used on the day's run. Camp was made a few miles down shore that evening where we were entranced by the antics of a large school of porpoise which cavorted just off shore. The graceful creatures would throw themselves completely out of the water and smack down with a great splash. Young porpoise, attempting to emulate the behavior of their parents, made the scene even more entertaining.

We quickly adjusted to the close confinement of our canoes. Every item had its special place with various priorities as



A palm tree canyon [above] which we hiked into. I believe that this was the one described by Erle Stanley Gardner in his Baja book. Rocky caves [below] at Punta Remedios give shelter from wind and sun.



Marvin Patchen sitting guard on canoes in case tide rises.



to closeness in case of need. Because supplies and equipment occupied almost all available space, the passengers were limited in their movement. Jean and Aletha dispensed the food back to Marvin and me from their forward positions. Bailing buckets and sop-up sponges had a very high placement priority, as did life-preservers. Also within easy reach were things such as maps, binoculars, cameras and fishing tackle. Jean's backpack served as her handbag, a magical receptacle from which she could produce a seemingly endless variety of useful objects.

We constantly kept a close weather watch. A fresh breeze could quickly stir up spray and chop that would send us scurrying for the shelter of shore. Long stretches of open water between headlands were avoided and we hugged the contours of the coast, no matter how much it twisted and turned. After all, we were there to enjoy the trip, not to prove how brave we were. Despite our vigilance we were sometimes overtaken by sudden winds which sprang up without warning. A note from the log describes one such experience. "West wind started just as we reached Punta Remedios. White caps came up quickly and we were soon shipping water. Everyone bailing with scoops and sponges. Finally made shore after anxious half hour. Gear portaged ashore and all hands relieved to be on dry land."

For the most part, though, the voyage was a smooth one. There were long, lazy hours of complete pleasure as we cruised through the rich gulf waters. Sea birds put on a never-ending display as they circled and dived to feed on teeming schools of fish. At times the sea would churn as the hapless anchovy, in an effort to escape the predatory fish, would leap from the water only to be snatched by a swooping frigate bird or tern. It was not unusual to see the dark bulk of a whale as the great creatures surfaced to blow a fountain of vapor. Fortunately, the leviathans kept a respectable distance from our canoes and apparently found us of little interest. Once we passed a little sea snake as it wriggled on the surface. A peculiar, oar-like tail propelled it through the water in a rather aimless fashion and its twisting movement was not unlike that of the snakes in the California desert regions.

We dined almost daily on fish which

were caught while trolling. The variety of fish in the gulf is almost beyond belief and none of our meals featured the same kind of sea food twice. Sierra mackerel, bonita, amberjack and cabrillo were just a few of the fish that appeared on the menu and we lived lavishly on nature's abundance. On one exceptional occasion we received a bounty on the sea that was entirely unexpected. Three days out of San Felipe we met the *Poseidon*, a charter boat carrying a party of sportfishermen. As we hailed the boat and came along side, the contrast in size between our little canoes and their big, sea-going craft was indeed impressive. Barely concealing their astonishment those worthy gentlemen reached into their ice box and presented us with four cans of cold beer!

On air flights over the gulf region of Baja California we had noticed alluring canyons lined with palm trees. Their inaccessibility and remoteness only strengthened our determination to explore them from the ground. Guided by Mexican topographical maps and notes made from aerial reconnaissance, we backpacked in to visit these pristine areas. As we walked through the natural avenues of native palms it was easy to imagine that we were the first humans to enjoy their solitude.

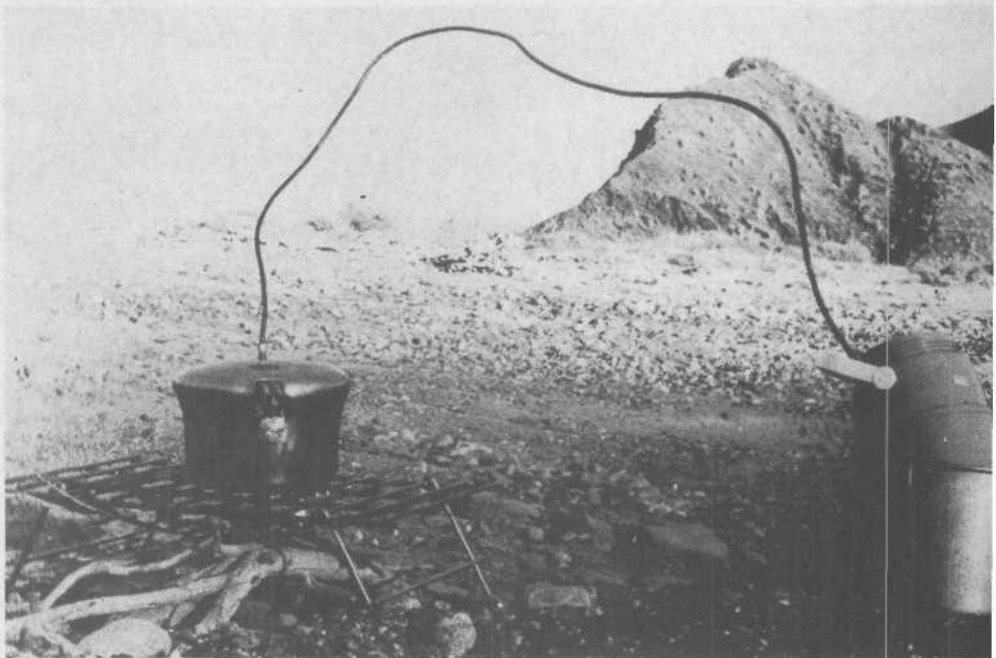
It took us three days to pass the 45-mile-long island called Angel De La Guardia as we sailed down the Canal of Whales and turned into beautiful Los Angeles Bay. There we took on gasoline and water before treating ourselves to a fine noon day meal prepared by Mama Diaz and her capable staff. We also were able to make a radio-telephone call to friends at home announcing that we were alive and well.

As we progressed south the days lost their identity as dates on the calendar. Time became a kaleidoscope of changing scenery. Various campspots were fixed in our memory, not as names on the map, but places of some unusual occurrence which stuck in our memories. For instance, there was the camp of the crafty coyote. One morning we awoke after a night's sleep on the shore of a lagoon to find the site covered with coyote tracks. We soon discovered, to our distress, that the anchor rope had been chewed through in two places (fortunately the canoes were on the beach), two

Continued on Page 46



Above: Jean and Aletha sitting under the shade of their elegant parasols while we cruise south. The pennant flies from the copper tube of our fresh water still [below] which Marvin designed. It is constructed from a pressure cooker and yields about one gallon of fresh water an hour from sea water.



Stopping at Rio Baja near Mulege to get our bearings.



IF THE many snakes residing in the West, the Mormon racer is a fellow of whom it may be said: "Here is a snake who knows his way around the desert."

Particularly at home in the higher deserts of the Great Basin, this neat brown-olive snake with the pale yellow underside likes his scenery open and spacious. Ideally, sagebrush and rabbit-brush should be clumped here and there for shade and shelter from the wind, with bunch grasses and desert annuals added to provide good ground level cover.

Neighborwise, the Mormon racer favors kangaroo rats and ground squirrels, since their laboriously excavated burrows make fine retreats into which he can rush when pursued by his enemies. In these, too, he can coil up comfortably when the night's cold descends on the desert's surface, or when the midsummer's sun makes scorchers out of these so-called "cold deserts." Surprisingly tolerant of heat as this snake is, there are still times when underground is the only place for him to be, especially when he is shedding and the danger of moisture loss so much greater.

Grocery-wise, he's a fellow who dines on what's available—principally insects when they're around—grasshoppers, crickets, katydids making up the late summer and fall menu, while mice, moles, birds, lizards, small snakes fill him up in early summer. Alert and active, the Mormon racer is a skillful hunter. On the prowl daytimes, head and neck held high, he hunts by sight, his slender body sliding along so easily there's scarcely a tell-tale movement in the low vegetation. His final approach to a prey he's spotted is a careful one, ending in a short swift dash and a right-on-target grab. Insects and small prey are simply bitten and swallowed. But that first grab may not be enough for larger lunch items. With a quick loop of his body, then, the snake holds his prey down, depending on the weight of his body and more tooth work for the final quieting. The lunch is then swallowed whole. Held firmly by his recurving teeth, it is worked gradually down his throat by alternating action of his upper and lower jaws, various bones of which can be moved independently.

Naturally enough, for snakes that usually get to be only two and one-half to

three and one-half feet long, there are plenty of enemies around. Old hawk-eye, the red tail sailing lazily around in the desert sky, watches for them from the air, burrowing owls get them, skunks dig them out, and larger snakes such as the big kings will dine on Mormon racers at every opportunity. But these wary snakes are not called racers for nothing. Quick reactions and speed were built into their slender muscular bodies long ago, and they know the ancient racer trick of instant enemy distraction.

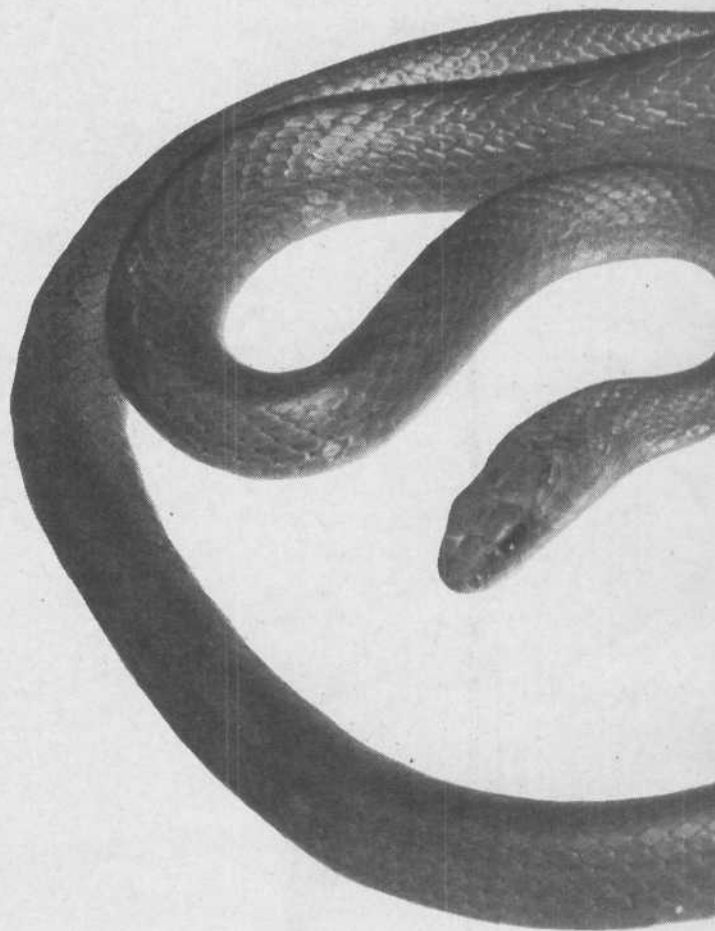
Hence, under imminent attack, the wily racer thrashes his body around to focus attention on the spot he's just left,

and takes off with surprising speed, disappearing almost like magic into the nearest hole, or among the sparse desert vegetation. Excellent climber that he is, he may take to a low desert shrub, lie dead still, hidden among the branches. If, however, he's cornered, he's no sissy, promptly producing threatening sound effects—that age-old tail vibration routine developed by the snake tribe long before the rattlers capitalized on it. Pushed too far, he will strike defensively. During the breeding season, when nerves are strung out anyhow and ordinarily good dispositions get pretty ragged, he may even initiate an attack.

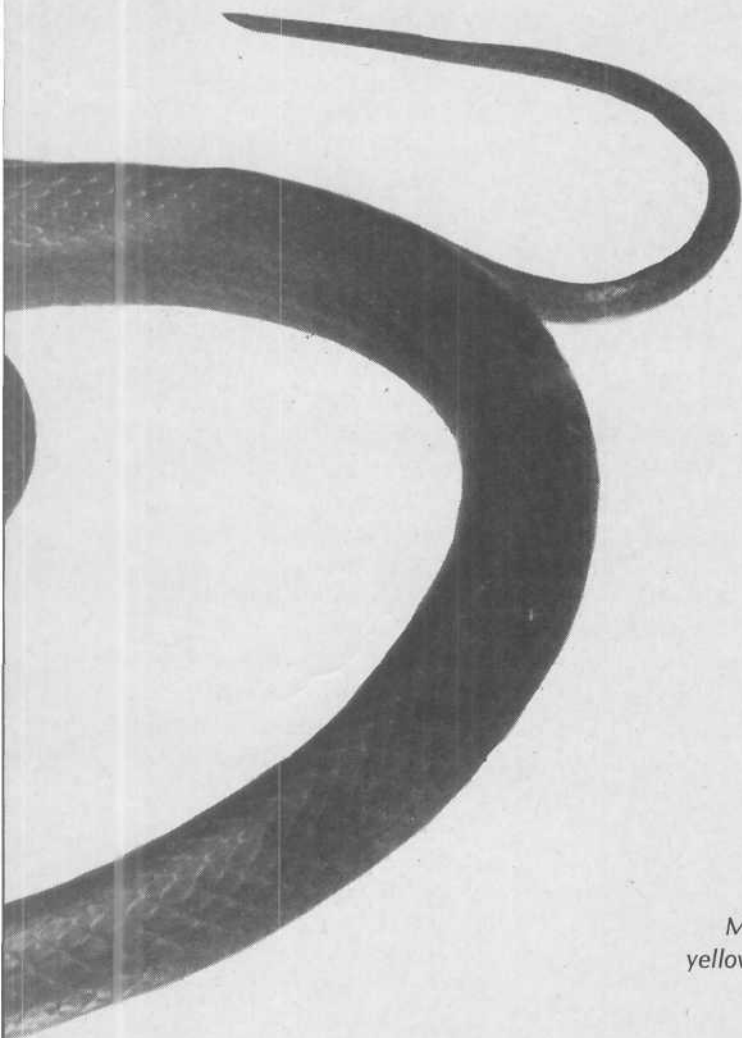
MORMON

by K. L. BOYNTON

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RACER



*Mormon racer or
yellow-bellied racer.
Photo courtesy
San Diego
Zoological Society.*

Active May through September, Mormon racers are out of circulation October through April. As fall approaches they leave their open range with its cover of desert shrubs and grasses, and often travel considerable distances to the rugged bare regions where their hibernating dens are located. Clumped together deep down among the rocks and crevices and underlying soil, they spend the winter. When the warmth of spring returns, they emerge, and after a sunning warm-up, shove off once more for their summer open range. Breeding takes place shortly after emergence, the males being sexually mature at one year,

the females not until three.

Mrs. Mormon racer produces one clutch of eggs a year, averaging some six in number, which is nothing like the production record of her bigger eastern cousin who may lay as many as 17. She deposits her neat little clutch in a rodent burrow, an ideal spot for snake egg development since it is pleasantly warm, but still well insulated from too much sun and from the night's cold. Her job now finished she can get on with the business of recouping from the wear and tear of egg production. Under the best of conditions, egg making takes its toll physically. It is particularly costly for a

snake living in a harsh desert environment. She must now make up for this energy loss and build up physically to be able to meet the demands of the long months of hibernation, a rigorous period during which the snake loses some seven percent of their autumn body weight.

Elliptical in shape, the eggs are tough and leathery. They absorb moisture from the warm humid burrow during the some 42-51 days required for incubation and hence at hatching time are about twice as big as when they were laid. With all this good protection provided by some bucktoothed architect, Mrs. M's eggs come off with better than 90 percent success, the snakelets arriving along about mid-August. Hatching takes time. The little one first slits open its shell with its "egg tooth," a temporary horny part of its nose scale, and then rests. Perhaps, in a little while, it puts its head out. Then it waits, maybe a day before finally coming out entirely. About nine inches long, the brand new racer can make lunging strikes and vibrate its tail ancestor fashion, at once.

Emerging from the burrow the first time, the little snakelet faces a world inhabited by big, bad, hungry predators. So dangerous are the first two months for these newcomers that only eight to thirteen percent of them make it the first year. Not that Nature shoves these little jobs out into the world with nothing to go on. Naturally alert and quick, they soon learn where the escape facilities are. Best of all, they are endowed with their tribe's hunting skill. Expert insect catchers they are indeed, and their August arrival is at the fortunate time when myriads of grasshoppers and crickets are out frolicking, so there is plenty of food. The youngsters make about a three-fold gain in weight during their first season of activity in spite of heat and moisture problems imposed by their desert home.

As a clan, snakes have a rougher time handling temperature problems than do mammals and birds since they lack the built-in body temperature regulating devices enjoyed by these other two. Their body temperature, then, follows closely that of their environment. Sluggish in the cold, they must depend on outside sources of heat to warm them for activity. Conversely, their upper tolerance of heat is reached early and consequently many desert snakes spend their days underground coming out for business

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when the sun finally quits blasting for the day. The Mormon racer, however, obviously less bothered by heat, spends the warm part of the day on the surface. In a big study made by the team of H. Hirth, R. C. Pendleton, A. C. King and T. R. Downard in Utah, it was found for instance that these snakes were abroad in June and July from a couple of hours after sunrise right through the noon heat and on to about seven o'clock in the evening. Nor were their body temperatures excessive, running from about 25 C to 37 C.

Not much was known about how these snakes actually handle the desert's high temperatures until zoologist W. S. Brown made his four year study of Mormon racers in Utah, using radio telemetry. Out to see what a typical June day was like in the life of a racer, he arrived at the known nighttime retreats of a couple of his candidates well before daybreak. Ensconcing himself in a strategic position, he waited for the slugs to get up.

The sun rose, but the snakes didn't. Time went on. The birds were up and doing, and here and there a lizard appeared on the scene, but the snakes didn't. Finally, at just about eight A.M. some two hours after sunrise, one of the racers stuck its head out from under its boulder. That's all. After awhile it added its neck. Then head waving back and forth, its tongue flicking, it tested its surroundings. Ten minutes more of this and

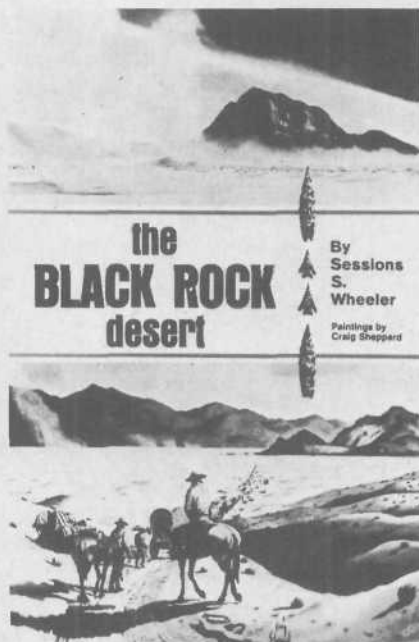
the snake, finally deciding apparently now it was time to get up, crawled out and over to a patch of cheat grass where it proceeded to sun itself.

Brown continued the day's surveillance and from that and many another he came up with a good solid reason why Mormon racers can be abroad by day: they regulate their temperature by slick behavior means. The first period of basking in the sunlight brings up their temperature from about 21 C to 31 C, a gain of 10 degrees in about as many minutes. And, as the hours go by, they maintain an optimum range a few degrees above this by subtle use of the various kinds of shade offered by the shrubs. Where they are in relation to the bush is determined by the morning or afternoon sun, and for the most part they seem to select places where the sunlight sifting through foliage makes a kind of mosaic of sun and shade on the ground. When the sun gets through too much, they retreat to patches of total shade.

In addition, they also change their body shape from time to time, depending on the amount of heat they want. Fully extended, for instance, the body gets sun its whole length. A looped position receives less, and when coiled up, there is little area for the sun to hit. When the ground becomes too hot, they can crawl up into a sage or rabbitbrush and there, maybe three feet off the ground, escape the hot surface radiation. Finally, if the day's heat gets to be too uncomfortable, they can retreat underground.

Dealing with cold temperatures is something quite different. The racer is unable to stand much of it, Hirth et al finding that a body temperature of 9.6 C is probably about the minimum. Hence the imperative need of reaching comfortable quarters well before winter sets in. They must, therefore, return to the hibernating area. Naturally enough, this annual two-way migration has long been of interest to zoologists. Hirth & company's study on three species of snakes threw some light on the subject, and then W. S. Brown, working with W. S. Parker this time and focusing on the Mormon racer, brought some interesting facts to light.

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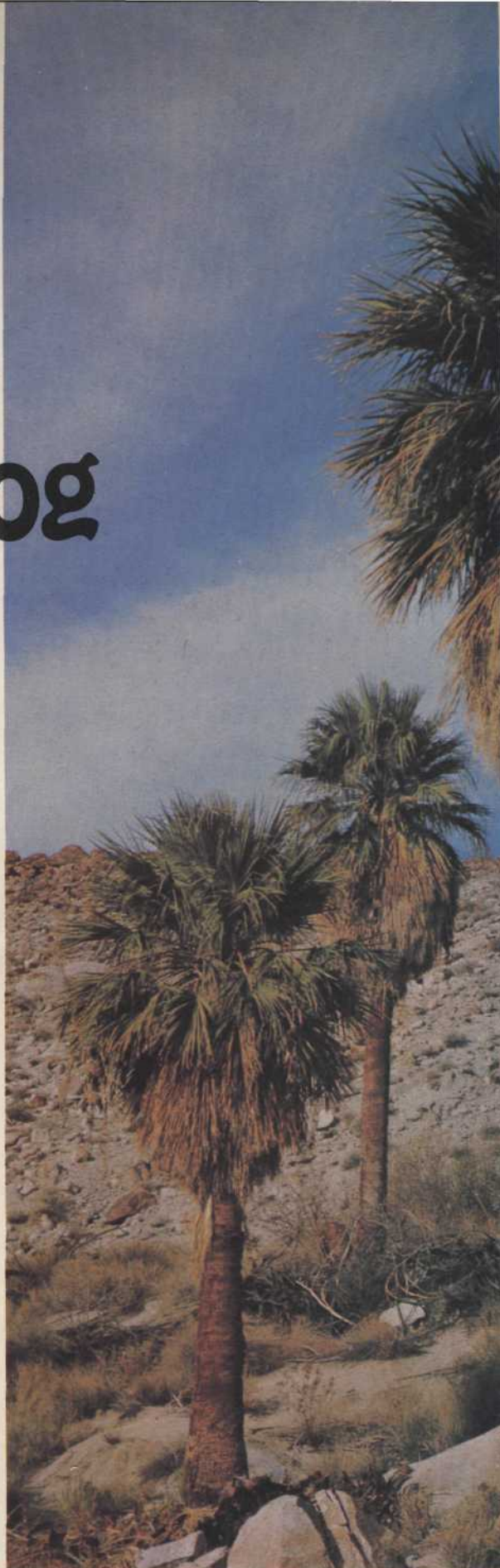
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CAMPING AND CLIMBING IN BAJA by John Robinson. Contains excellent maps and photos. A guidebook to the Sierra San Pedro Martir and the Sierra Juarez of Upper Baja California. Much of this land is unexplored and unmapped still. Car routes to famous ranches and camping spots in palm-studded canyons with trout streams tempt weekend tourists who aren't up to hiking. Paperback, 96 pages, \$2.95.

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THE NEVADA DESERT by Sessions S. Wheeler. Provides information on Nevada's state parks, historical monuments, recreational areas and suggestions for safe, comfortable travel in the remote sections of western America. Paperback, illus., 168 pages, \$2.95.

WESTERN SIERRA JEEP TRAILS by Roger Mitchell. Twenty interesting backcountry trips easily accessible from California's great central valley. A rating system included to determine how difficult a route is before you try it. Paperback, illustrated, maps, \$2.50.

BACK ROADS OF CALIFORNIA by Earl Tholander and the Editors of Sunset Books. Early stagecoach routes, missions, remote canyons, old prospector cabins, mines, cemeteries, etc., are visited as the author travels and sketches the California Backroads. Through maps and notes, the traveler is invited to get off the freeways and see the rural and country lanes throughout the state. Paperback, large format, unusually beautiful illustrations, 207 pages, \$6.95.

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HAPPY WANDERER TRIPS by Slim Barnard. Well-known TV stars, Henrietta and Slim Barnard put together a section of their trips throughout the West from their Happy Wanderer travel shows. Books have excellent maps, history, cost of lodging, meals, etc. Perfect for families planning weekends. Both books are large format, heavy paperback, 150 pages each and \$2.95 each. Volume One covers California and Volume Two Arizona, Nevada and Mexico. Please state WHICH VOLUME when ordering.

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TURQUOISE, The Gem of the Centuries by Oscar T. Branson. The most complete and lavishly illustrated all color book on turquoise. Identifies 43 localities, treated and stabilized material, gives brief history of the gem and details the individual techniques of the Southwest Indian Tribes. Heavy paperback, large format, 68 pages, \$7.95.

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WILD BROTHERS OF THE INDIANS by Alice Wesche. Beautifully illustrated story for children about the Mimbres potters of New Mexico. Included are instructions for drawing the distinctive designs of the Mimbrenos which adults, too, will want to use for their crafts. Large format, paperback \$4.95.

INDIAN JEWELRY MAKING by Oscar T. Branson. This book is intended as a step-by-step how-to-do-it method of making jewelry. An intriguing all-color publication that is an asset to the consumer as well as to the producer of Indian jewelry today because it provides the basic knowledge of how jewelry is made so one can judge if it is well made and basically good design. Large format, paperback, \$7.95.

ROCK DRAWINGS OF THE COSO RANGE by Campbell Grant, James Baird and J. Kenneth Pringle. A Maturango Museum publication, this book tells of sites of rock art in the Coso Range which, at 4,000 feet, merges with the flatlands of the northern Mojave Desert. Paperback, illustrated, detailed drawings, maps, 144 pages, \$3.95.

THE CREATIVE OJO BOOK by Diane Thomas. Instructions for making the colorful yarn tall-mans originally made by Pueblo and Mexican Indians. Included are directions for wall-hung ojos, necklaces, mobiles and gift-wraps tie-ons. Well illustrated with 4-color photographs, 52 pages, paperback, \$2.95.

SOUTHWEST INDIAN CRAFT ARTS by Clara Lee Tanner. One of the best books on the subject, covering all phases of the culture of the Indians of the Southwest. Authentic in every way. Color and black and white illustrations, line drawings. Hardcover, 205 pages, large format, \$15.00.

RELICS OF THE REDMAN by Marvin & Helen Davis. Relics can be valuable! Those dating back to Indian history in our land are becoming almost priceless, say the authors. How to search for these "hard to find" Indian relics, where to search and at what time of year, and types of tools needed, are among the many helpful suggestions given. Large format, many color and b/w illustrations. Paperback, 63 pages, \$3.95.

SOUTHWESTERN INDIAN TRIBES by Tom Bahti. An excellent description, history and current status of the Indians of the Southwest, including dates of their ceremonies and celebrations. Profusely illustrated with 4-color photographs of the Indian Country and the arts and crafts of the many tribes. Large format, heavy paperback, 72 pages, \$2.50.

ENCOUNTER WITH AN ANGRY GOD by Carobeth Laird. A fascinating true story of the author's marriages to anthropologist John Peabody Harrington, the "angry god," and to the remarkable Chemehuevi Indian, George Laird. The appeal of this amazing memoir is so broad it has drawn rave reviews throughout the country and is being hailed as a classic. Hardcover, 230 pages, \$8.95.

THE ETHNO-BOTANY OF THE COAHUILLA INDIANS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA by David Prescott Barrows. Although basically a study of plants used by the Cahuilla Indians, Barrows' fascinating work is rich in material of interest to the historian, anthropologist, botanist, geographer and lay reader. Special introductory Material by Harry W. Lawton, Lowell John Bean and William Bright, Paperback, 129 pages, \$5.95.

SOME LAST CENTURY ACCOUNTS OF THE INDIANS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA Edited by Robert F. Heizer. Seventeen out-of-print articles or federal reports published between 1857 and 1907 on the Luiseno, Diegueno and Cahuilla tribes of Southern California, depicting the efforts of the people to maintain some of their customary habits and religious ceremonies. Paperback, 92 pages, \$4.95.

TEMALPAKH by Lowell John Bean and Katherine Silva Saubel. Temalpakh means "from the earth," in Cahuilla, and covers the many uses of plants used for food, medicine, rituals and those used in the manufacturing of baskets, sandals, hunting tools; and plants used for dwellings. Makes for a better understanding of environmental and cultural relationships. Well illustrated, 225 pages, hardcover, \$10.00.

FORKED TONGUES AND BROKEN TREATIES Edited by Donald E. Worcester. This book gives us a better understanding of the unequal struggle of native against immigrant while our nation was being explored and settled. Profusely illustrated with excellent photos, a "must" reference for historians, students, libraries. Hardcover, 494 pages, \$9.95.

DICTIONARY OF PREHISTORIC INDIAN ARTIFACTS OF THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST by Franklin Barnett. A highly informative book that both illustrates and describes Indian artifacts of the Southwest, it is a valuable guide for the person interested in archaeology and anthropology. Includes 250 major types of artifacts. Each item has a photo and definition. Paperback, 130 pages, beautifully illus., \$7.95.

INDIAN BASKET WEAVING, How to Weave Pomo, Yurok, Pima and Navajo Baskets by Sandra Corrie Newman. Besides explicit information on gathering and preparation of natural materials and weaving techniques, the author brings out the meaning of the craft to the part-takers of these traditions. Paperback, lavishly illustrated, 91 pages, \$4.95.

THE CHEMEHUEVIS by Carobeth Laird. A superb ethnography destined to become a classic in anthropology, by the author of *Encounter With An Angry God*. Based on information provided by the author's husband, George, a Chemehuevi tribesman, the work is a delight to both scholars and general readers. With glossary, maps, index, place-name index and appendices on language and cartography. Beautifully illustrated. 349 pages, paperback, \$8.95, hardcover, \$15.00.

LAND OF POCO TIEMPO by Charles F. Lummis. A reprint of the famous writer and historian of his adventures among the Indians of New Mexico. Lummis was one of the foremost writers of the West. Paperback, 236 pages, \$2.95.

Gems/Minerals

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ROCKS AND MINERALS OF CALIFORNIA compiled by Vinson Brown, David Allen and James Stark. This revised edition will save you hours of time by the description and pictures of rocks and minerals found in this state. Color pictures with clearly developed keys show you how to identify what you have found and gives you fine tools to increase your ability as a field collector. Paperback, well illustrated with photos, locality maps, charts and quadrangle map information. 200 pages, \$4.95.

DESERT GEM TRAILS by Mary Frances Strong. *DESERT Magazine's* Field Trip Editor's popular field guide for rockhounds. The "bible" for both amateur and veteran rockhounds and back country explorers, and covers the gems and minerals of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts. Heavy paperback, 80 pages, \$2.00.

FIELD GUIDE TO ROCKS AND MINERALS by Frederick H. Pough. Authoritative guide to identification of rocks and minerals. Experts recommend this for all amateurs as one of the best. Many color illustrations. Hardcover, \$9.95.

GEM MINERALS OF IDAHO by John Beckwith. Contains information on physical and optical characteristics of minerals; the history, lore and fashioning of many gems. Also 11 rewarding field trips to every sort of collecting area. Slick paperback, maps and photos, 123 pages. \$4.95.

CALIFORNIA GEM TRAILS by Darold J. Henry. This completely revised fourth edition is the most authoritative guide for collectors of rocks, gemstones, minerals and fossils. Profusely illustrated with maps and contains excellent descriptive text. Paperback, \$3.00.

UTAH GEM TRAILS by Bessie W. Simpson. The casual rockhound or collector interested in collecting petrified wood, fossils, agate and crystals will find this guide most helpful. The book does not give permission to collect in areas written about, but simply describes and maps the areas. Paperback, illustrated, maps, \$3.50.

GEM TRAILS OF ARIZONA by Bessie W. Simpson. This field guide is prepared for the hobbyist and almost every location is accessible by car or pickup. Accompanied by maps to show sandy roads, steep rocky hills, etc., as cautions. Laws regarding collecting on Federal and Indian land outlined. Paperback, 88 pages, \$4.00.

NEW MEXICO GEM TRAILS by Bessie W. Simpson. Field guide for rockhounds with 40 maps and 65 locations. 88 pages, profusely illustrated. \$4.00.

Mining

CALIFORNIA GOLD CAMPS, A Geographical and Historical Dictionary of Camps, Towns and Localities Where Gold Was Found and Mined, and Wayside Stations and Trading Centers, by Erwin G. Gudde. Includes seven excellent maps, in addition to a List of Places by County, A glossary and Bibliography. Highly recommended. Hardcover, 467 pages, \$19.95.

GOLD AND SILVER IN THE WEST by T. H. Watkins. Over 200 photos, illustrations and maps, many in full color. Complete story of gold and silver mining in the American West, Alaska and British Columbia, including sagas of conquistadores chasing myths in Old Mexico, speculators chasing profits in North American mining camps, instant towns, the evolution from simple placer to major industry, etc. Large format, hardcover, originally published at \$17.50, now priced at \$10.95.

MINES OF THE SAN GABRIELS by John W. Robinson. Various districts are described such as the San Fernando and the Santa Anita placers, the gold mines of the Soledad region and Lytle Creek, as well as the lode mines on the upper San Gabriel River and on the slopes of Mt. Baldy. The Los Angeles County ranks among the top gold producers in the state, all of which comes from the San Gabriels. Paperback, illustrated, 72 pages, \$2.50.

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MINES OF THE HIGH DESERT by Ronald Dean Miller. Author Miller knew both the countryside of the High Desert and the men who were responsible for the development of the Mines of the High Desert. Here are stories of the Dale District never told before, with many early as well as contemporary photographs of the early mines included. Paperback, \$2.50.

MINES OF JULIAN by Helen Ellsberg. Facts and lore of the bygone mining days when Julian, in Southern California, is reported to have produced some seven million dollars of bullion. Paperback, well illustrated, \$2.50.

MINES OF THE MOJAVE by Ron and Peggy Miller covers the numerous mining districts running across the upper Mojave Desert from Tropic, west of the town of Mojave, to Mountain Pass, a little west of the Nevada border. Paperback, 67 pages, \$2.50.

WHERE TO FIND GOLD IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA by James Klein. Pinpoints areas around the Los Angeles basin such as San Gabriel Canyon, Lytle Creek and Orange County. Tips on how to find gold, equipment needed and how to stake a claim are included as well as the lost treasure tales of each area. Paperback, illustrated, 95 pages, \$4.95.

WHERE TO FIND GOLD IN THE DESERT by James Klein is a sequel to *Where to Find Gold in Southern California*. Author Klein includes lost treasure tales and gem locations as he tells where to find gold in the Rosamond-Mohave area, the El Paso Mountains, Randsburg and Barstow areas, and many more. Paperback, 112 pages, \$3.95.

WHERE TO FIND GOLD IN THE MOTHER LODGE by James Klein. As in his *Where to Find Gold in the Desert* and *Where to Find Gold in Southern California*, author Klein guides you to the areas in which people are doing the best now. He includes history, tips on equipment needed, how to pan, how to stake claims, etc. Paperback, 121 pages, illustrated with photos and maps, \$4.95.

History

OWYHEE TRAILS by Mike Hanley and Ellis Lucia. The authors have teamed to present the boisterous past and intriguing present of this still wild corner of the West sometimes called the I-O-N, where Idaho, Oregon and Nevada come together. Hardcover, 225 pages, \$9.95.

OUR HISTORIC DESERT, The Story of the Anza-Borrego State Park. Text by Diana Lindsay, Edited by Richard Pourade. The largest state park in the United States, this book presents a concise and cogent history of the things which have made this desert unique. The author details the geologic beginning and traces the history from Juan Bautista de Anza and early-day settlers, through to the existence today of the huge park. Hardcover, 144 pages, beautifully illustrated, \$10.50.

THE LAND OF LITTLE RAIN by Mary Austin. This book, first published in 1903, is an acknowledged classic of southwestern literature. The author discovered the charm and interest of the timeless and colorful world of the yucca, the coyote, the buzzard, the roadrunner. She recounts, with insight and sensitivity, the lure of gold, the stagecoach towns, the Indian campodios . . . all the activities of broad valleys and spacious hills. Illus., paperback, 171 pages, \$2.45.

VANISHED ARIZONA: RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARMY LIFE OF A NEW ENGLAND WOMAN by Martha Summerhayes. First published in 1908, this is a new edition. A first-hand account of frontier army life; a true classic. New Publisher's Preface. New Map, New Index. Hardcover, 392 pages, \$10.00.

SHADY LADIES OF THE WEST by Ronald Dean Miller. Everyone knows that the harlot was the vanguard of every move westward, and that she was as much of a part of the western scene as the marshal, the badman, the trail-hand or the rancher. Many are the reasons she has been neglected by the historian—none of them valid. Author Miller, in this enlightening book, seeks to remedy some of the paucity of information on the American pioneers of this ancient profession. Hardcover, comprehensive bibliography, 224 pages, \$7.95.

CALIFORNIA PLACE NAMES by Erwin G. Gudde. This book presents the story of thousands of geographical names of California, giving their dates, circumstances of naming, their origin and evolution, their connection with our national history and their relation to the California landscape. This third edition incorporates many new entries and extensive revisions to older entries. An important addition is the reference list of obsolete and variant names. Hardcover, 416 pages, \$15.75.

NEVADA PLACE NAMES by Helen S. Carlson. The sources of names can be amusing or tragic, whimsical or practical. In any case, the reader will find this book good reading as well as an invaluable reference tool. Hardcover, 282 pages, \$15.00.

NEW MEXICO PLACE NAMES edited by T. M. Pearce. Lists and gives a concise history of the places, towns, former sites, mountains, mesas, rivers, etc., in New Mexico, including those settled by the early Spaniards. Good for treasure hunters, bottle collectors and history buffs. Paperback, 187 pages with more than 5,000 names, \$2.45.

ARIZONA PLACE NAMES by Will C. Barnes, Revised and enlarged by Byrd H. Granger. Excellent reference book with maps, Biographical Information and Index. Large format, hardcover, 519 pages, \$11.50.

HISTORICAL ATLAS OF CALIFORNIA by Warren A. Beck and Ynez D. Hasse. Extensive documentation and pertinent detail make this atlas a valuable aid to the student, scholar and every one interested in the Golden State. 101 excellent maps present information on the major faults, early Spanish explorations, Mexican land grants, routes to gold fields, the Butterfield and Pony Express routes, CCC camps, World War II Installations, etc. Hardcover, large format, extensive index, \$12.50.

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RAILROADS OF NEVADA AND EASTERN CALIFORNIA VOL. I by David F. Myrick. The poignant record of over 43 railroads of Northern Nevada, many of them never before chronicled. Fantastic reproduction of rare photographs and maps (over 500). A deluxe presentation. Large format, hardcover, \$15.00.

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RETRACING THE BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND TRAIL THROUGH ARIZONA by Gerald T. Anheert. This book was written to mark the physical route and station locations in the most hazardous segment of the Butterfield Trail—Arizona. The author's original intent was merely to find, follow and map the Trail, however, the long and difficult task resulted in putting this vital information in a book which makes it easy for others to follow, or to provide a delightful armchair journey over this dramatic route. Profusely illustrated with maps and photos, this book is a visual hand-tool to the explorer; an exciting segment of Americana to the scholar and historian. Large format, hardcover, \$9.75.

LAS VEGAS [As It Began—As It Grew] by Stanley W. Paher. Here is the first general history of early Las Vegas ever to be published. The author was born and raised there in what, to many, is considered a town synonymous with lavish gambling and unabashed night life. Newcomers to the area, and even natives themselves will be surprised by the facts they did not know about their town. Western Americana book lovers will appreciate its usefulness. You don't have to gamble on this one! Hardcover, large format, loaded with historical photos, 180 pages, \$12.50.

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WELLS FARGO, The Legend by Dale Robertson. In his own personal narrative style, without departing from known fact, Dale has recreated the Wells Fargo legend. Entertaining reading in addition to excellent illustrations by Roy Purcell. Paperback, 154 pages, \$4.95.

ANZA CONQUERS THE DESERT by Richard R. Pourade. The colonization of California in the 1770s received its greatest impetus with the opening of an overland route from northern Mexico. The man who opened it was Juan Bautista de Anza. This book is the story of his conquest of the Great Desert which for 200 years had impeded the northern advance of the Spanish Empire. The colonists who were led into California by Anza founded the presidio of San Francisco; other colonists who came over the road opened by Anza helped found the city of Los Angeles. Large format, hardcover, beautifully illustrated, 216 pages, \$12.50.

THE COLORFUL BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND STAGE by Richard Pourade and Marjorie Reed. With 21 stage coach paintings by Miss Reed, the text concentrates on the Fort Yuma to San Francisco run of the tough Butterfield route. Album format, heavy art paper, \$6.50.

THE LIFE, TIMES AND TREACHEROUS DEATH OF JESSE JAMES, by Frank Triplett, edited by Joseph Snell. Published originally the month following Jesse James' murder in 1882, controversy has surrounded Triplett's book for almost 90 years since its first appearance. This present reprint brings to the public a work of both historical value and personal interest, made more significant historically by Joseph Snell's editorial contributions, and made more interesting by the passing years which have continued the facts and legends of the most renowned outlaw of America's West—Jesse James. Hardcover, well illustrated, 343 pages, originally published at \$15.00, now priced at \$7.50.

Miscellaneous

RUFUS, by Rutherford Montgomery. From one of America's best-loved children's nature writers comes the story of Rufus, a fierce and proud bobcat struggling against nature and man. As Rufus grows and matures, his exciting adventures make fascinating reading for adults and children alike. Hardcover, 137 pages, \$4.95.

THE MAN WHO CAPTURED SUNSHINE, A Biography of John W. Hilton by Katherine Ainsworth. Although John Hilton is best known as the "Dean of American Desert Painters," he is also a distinguished botanist, gemologist, zoologist, noted writer and linguist, guitarist and singer. Anyone who has seen or heard of Hilton's marvelous talent will want to have this delightfully written biography. Hardcover, includes eight beautiful four-color reproductions of his paintings, \$12.95.

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DESERT VACATIONS ARE FUN by Robert Needham. A complete, factual and interesting handbook for the desert camper. Valuable information on weather conditions, desert vehicles, campsites, food and water requirements, in addition to desert wildlife, mines, ghost towns, and desert hobbies. Paperback, illustrated, 10 maps, 134 pages, \$3.95.

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FROSTY, A Raccoon to Remember by Harriett E. Weaver. The only uniformed woman on California's State Park Ranger crews for 20 years, Harriett Weaver shares her hilarious and heartwarming experiences being a "mother" to an orphaned baby raccoon. A delightful book for all ages. Illustrated with line-drawings by Jennifer O. Dewey, hardcover, 156 pages, \$5.95.

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TO HELL ON WHEELS by Alan H. Siebert. A must for every desert traveler, this is not just another survival book, it is a manual of mobility for the recreational vehicle driver who is looking for something more than the organized campground. Highly recommended for both the new-comer and old-timer. Paperback, 64 pages, well illustrated, \$2.95.

EARTHQUAKE COUNTRY by Robert Iacopi. New, revised edition brings maps and descriptive text up to date as nearly as practicable. Well illustrated, the book separates fact from fiction and shows where faults are located, what to do in the event of an earthquake, past history and what to expect in the future. Large format, slick paperback, 160 pages, \$3.95.

A MILE HIGH

BISBEE, ARIZONA is still a mile high. Its houses are still built up the steep hillside of the canyons and gulches of the Mule Mountains. The Phelps Dodge Copper Queen and Lavender Pit mines remain overwhelmingly mammoth; the legendary Copper Queen Hotel, now 76 years old, is operating enthusiastically, and around the corner, Brewery Gulch survives as a colorful reminder of this important copper mining center of the 1880s.

However, the mines are closed now, and my husband, born and raised in Bisbee, had begun to wonder just what had happened to his old home town. He remembered 330 days of sunshine, and the desert in bloom, but he also reminisced about the daring by-gone episodes that small boys re-enacted in what had once been a booming western town.

Last winter, in the midst of Oregon's rain, we planned a nostalgic return. This April, we took Interstate Highway 10, through Phoenix and Tucson as far as Benson where we turned southeast on Highway 80. We drove right by fancied-up Tombstone, and began the steep climb up the Mule Mountains followed by a dramatic descent through the new-to-us Mule Pass Tunnel, and on down Tombstone Canyon which becomes Main Street, Bisbee. Only six miles more and you're in Mexico.

The story of Bisbee starts in the late 1870s when Lt. Jack Dunn left Ft. Huachuca on an Apache scouting mission. The soldiers camped at a spring, probably near what was to become the center of the present town. Legend has it, and there are lots of legends about those days, that Dunn was walking around, leaned down and picked up a piece of silver ore. On August 2, 1877, his group registered this area as the Rucker claim; Lt. Rucker was one of the scouts.

The rest of Bisbee's early beginnings vary a bit with each telling—both in the early newspapers and in later books. However, most agree that Dunn confid-

ed in, and joined up with George Warren, a prospector; Dunn was to have been a co-owner, with Warren actually working the claim.

Several important changes occurred rapidly. Most important was the discovery that there was vastly more copper here than silver—ultimately Bisbee be-

came one of the richest copper mining areas in the world. Shortly after, Dunn was dealt out of his ownership. Then, George Warren, too, lost his interest in the mine when, one riotous Fourth of July, he bet his stake that he could run faster than a friend's horse. He lost.

The population of what is now Cochise



*Old house
on Brewery Gulch.*



Bisbee in the days of the 1909 street car. Photograph courtesy of the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum.

County began to expand as men came to prospect for silver, gold and copper in the neighboring areas of Gleeson, Charleston and Fairbank—all within 25 miles of already established Tombstone and growing Bisbee.

In the early days getting the copper ore to market was unbelievably difficult. First, a road of sorts was cut over the mountains, and teams of 20 or more mules hauled wagon loads of ore to the nearest railroad at Fairbank. There, it was loaded on to Santa Fe Railroad cars, carried to the East Coast, and shipped to Swansea, Wales to be smelted!

Clearly, this was not only expensive, but profits were six months or more in returning. Bigger investors were necessary to raise capital to build a smelter in Bisbee. Very soon, as was usual in mining camps, smaller claims were bought up by larger groups. Bisbee was no exception.

In 1880, Phelps Dodge, then a small Eastern firm, sent Dr. James Douglas, a Presbyterian minister turned metallurgist, to Arizona to acquire further properties. And so he did, and very well. Phelps Dodge, usually referred to as The Company or nowadays as simply P.D., eventually owned nearly all of the copper claims in the area.

In 1889, Dr. Douglas and the Copper Queen—the name of the mine and also

the name under which the Phelps Dodge Company worked for many years—built their own railroad from Fairbank to Bisbee, dramatically reducing the cost of bringing supplies in and shipping copper out. By now Bisbee had a wood burning smelter, and conversion of the ore was done on home ground.

The whole country was developing a growing need for copper because of the increasing use of electricity, the telegraph and the telephone. The boom was on by the 1890s. Miners arrived from Central Europe and England as well as from the East and West Coasts. Brick streets were laid, and the business district expanded. Joe Goldwater, who with A. A. Castenada had had a store on Main Street since 1881, was now joined by others. It was a great day in 1909 when the street car started operations from Warren, a "suburb" where many of the company engineers lived, to the company's general offices in Bisbee. The Phelps Dodge office on Main Street had been built in 1895; directly behind it, the Copper Queen Hotel, owned by the company, was in business in 1902. The Muheim Block building, built in 1905 at the entrance to Brewery Gulch, housed the Muheim Brewery on the ground floor, with the Arizona Hotel above it. Downtown Bisbee was thriving.

The Bisbee Daily Review, in its 50th

Anniversary Issue, says that the people of the early days could be placed in three classes: the rough and tough element—the outlaws, the men who came to evade the law; the law and order group—not necessarily more honest than the outlaws, but much more clever; the Army—there to keep the various tribes of Apaches under control, and to help the local police officers keep the community within bounds.

The paper, at least for its anniversary issue, seems to have omitted a fourth group, women referred to as "soiled doves." They worked along Brewery Gulch which by the 1900s had 40 some bars, numerous tawdry hotels and brothels. Brewery Gulch, a crooked canyon street, was definitely the entertainment center in this stage of Bisbee's history.

Shaft mining continued; other large companies such as Calumet and Arizona and Shattuck and Denn operated in areas adjoining those of the Copper Queen. The population grew to 20,000 by 1913.

Then, as World War I approached, so did a new method of mining. The first open pit mine in Arizona, the Sacramento Pit, was started. Now, instead of descending to deep, underground tunnels, the miners dynamited and dug craters circularly from the top of the earth down. At first, they used rail equipment, but later switched to trucks.

*Bisbee panorama showing
houses built on the side of the hill.
Tomstone Canyon is in
the foreground.*



Bisbee and mining went through the Great Depression and more wars, and, then, one day the company closed the mines. The profitable high grade ore had been dug out. The night shift of December 14, 1974 was the last to work the newer Lavender Pit. The world famous, underground Copper Queen closed June 13, 1975. Bisbee is no longer a mining town.

My husband's father, Dr. Raphael B. Durfee, arrived in Bishop several years before World War I. He came as the first public health officer for Cochise County, but soon took on additional duties of preventive medicine for the town and, particularly, for the schools. Until his arrival, there was no sewage control, nor any purity control for either water or milk. Disease was frequent in the community—especially in the homes on the lowest level of the hillside.

His family settled in a house on Quality Hill, the hill favored by the town's bankers and the "Company" doctors and engineers. Most had come from the East to work in this dry climate because of their own health. The adults, at least, led a very formal life within a well-defined small circle of friends. My husband remembers that the men wore dinner jackets to dinner parties—with the women in evening dress as well. Picnics were organized all-day affairs with many baskets of food carried to Ramsey Canyon or Turkey Creek.

Often his father took him and a neighbor's son in the Model A when he went to inoculate the children in Wilcox, Pearce, Gleeson or Dos Cabezas; the last three are now listed as "ghost" towns. They were prepared for these trips over the wagon-rut roads; extra brake bands, a good pump, tire patches and baling wire were normal equipment. The boys amused themselves by raising quarantine cards with "smallpos" or "scarlet fever" on them whenever they passed anyone.

Naturally, the Fourth of July was the great day of the year. An Apache runner ran the 20 plus miles from Tombstone to Bisbee—he usually got there before sun-

down. The coaster race was the most popular event. The homemade cars were steered like a sled—with ropes—a broom handle was used for brakes. The race started near the top of Tombstone Canyon, and, with luck, stopped many curves later at the Post Office. The streets were lined as if it had been Indianapolis.

Another competition was the rock drilling contest when miners pounded hammers on the top of steel bits to see who could drill deepest into granite rock. The 1913 record was 52 inches in 15 minutes! And, then there was the mucking contest to determine who could dig mud out of a mine car in the shortest time. Of course, there was a parade—with Dr. Durfee on a white horse.

Another thing my husband remembers well is the orange box which was filled with "rocks" and rested on the back porch. On one side the "rocks" were Bisbee Blue turquoise and on the other malachite. These were gathered during forbidden excursions to abandoned mine tunnels. The box remained at home when he left for college in 1934. Now that these are semi-precious stones, he would certainly like to find that orange box.

One last reminiscence is that of sitting on a hill to watch a revolution in nearby Sonora, Mexico. One day, in fact, all of Bisbee closed down, and everyone went

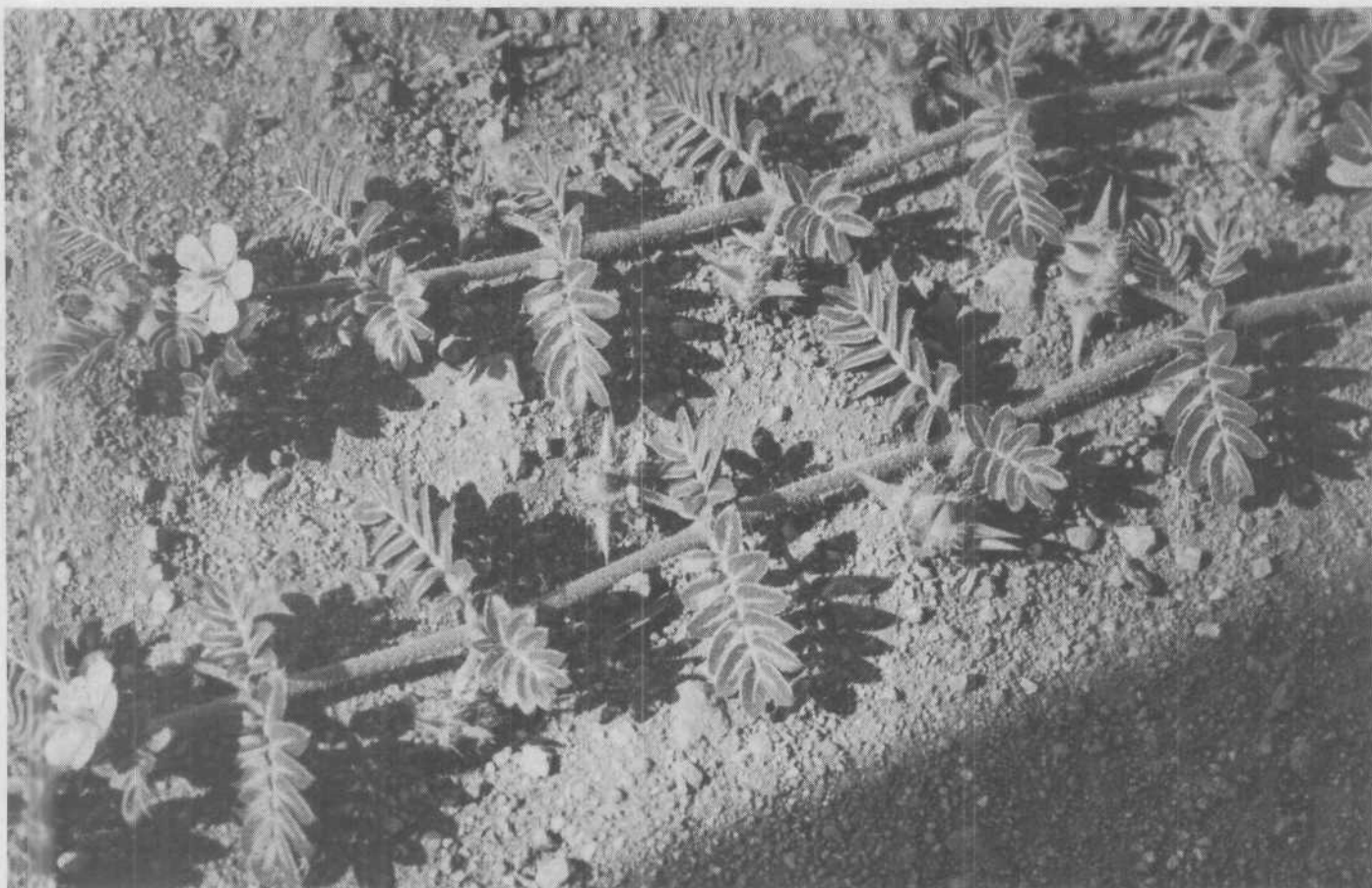
to watch an attack on Naco, the closest Mexican town.

Just how did we find Bisbee 40 years later? Had the town and the customs changes? Was Bisbee going to become another ghost town now that the mines had been closed for three years?

Bisbee had and still retains a distinctive character totally different from most early Western towns because it was never a single, straight street. Because of the terrain, the houses had to be built up the steep sides of the canyons and gulches of the Mule Mountains. Tents, shacks, adobe and finally frame houses followed each other up the hillsides. Some of the adobe and many of the original frame buildings remain. From the top looking down, you see roofs, often corrugated tin, one under the other until you reach the center of town. Looking up, you see porches. The long ones belong to the old boarding houses built to accommodate the early miners—men who arrived alone. Interspersed are smaller porches of more recent residents—miners with families. Today, there are several contemporary homes, and, more important, two solar homes. An environmental group has just received a grant to explore further uses of solar energy here.

Downtown, the Copper Queen Hotel is being genteelly refurbished by a new

Continued on Page 41



PUNCTUREVINE

by
DOROTHY
ROBERTSON

CONSIDER THE lowly puncturevine, which is well on its way to inhabiting the earth—where you least expect it! And for some incomprehensible reason, it thrives particularly well over our deserts in aggressive abundance.

Most of us at some time or other, often when we are least aware, have fallen victim to this most vicious of weeds which, strangely enough, is at the same time a really beautifully, graceful and lace-like plant.

It is the puncturevine's needle-sharp spines which make this underhanded little meany one of the most hated of all weeds.

But let us stop and examine this representative of the Caltrop family the *Tribulus terrestris*, with its number of aliases: puncturevine (by which it is most popularly known), burnut, bullhead or torrito, goat's head or bull's horn. Suspend your personal animosity—are you not surprised at the delicate beauty of this sprawling little gem of a plant?

Palely green tracery of stems and leaves, the leaves a silvery-green, with dainty little sun-gold flowers, doesn't it remind you of the intricate art of medieval artisans? Say, illuminated manuscripts?

The many stems grow from two to six feet in length. Both flowers and the curious nut-like "fruits" may be found throughout the summer months in various stages of maturity on this fast-growing plant.

The puncturevine thrives especially on the deserts of the Southwest, from the first spring blooming until late autumn. The seeds, when dry and dormant, are particularly nasty for they remain hidden in the parent bed just waiting for some unwary victim to step on them, thus helping them on their vicious and reproductive way.

Actually, the puncturevine is not a native American plant despite its bull-headed proprietary propensities. It is an alien hitchhiker par excellence, for the puncturevine's seeds first gained its

foothold in this country when brought, it has been claimed, as ballast in trading ships around the turn of the century. This little villain of plantdom hails from southern Europe; actually, from around the shores of the Mediterranean. Is it any wonder that its innumerable victims have heartily wished it had stayed in its own habitat?

Unfortunately, today the puncturevine has successfully infiltrated into almost all parts of the Southwest, and still spreading, thriving always, well below the 7000 foot level. It has been helped along in its nefarious propagation by unwitting and always unwilling carriers. Unlike the winged seeds of other plant families, *Tribulus terrestris* must first find its victim—any victim will do, animate or inanimate. It is these "victims," be they bi-ped, quadruped, rubber-tired vehicles or acts of God, which carry the needle-sharp burrs far afield. Flood waters and irrigation waters also do their part in spreading this pesky menace, but

it is really on feet, fur and tires upon which the puncturevine relies to take it the furthest and the fastest from its home-bed.

There are a great many of us who can remember only too well the feelings of frustrating revolt when the thin auto tires of the early twenties would give up the ghost far too often, and, upon removal of the flat tires, the fury experienced when you saw the myriad spines pin-cushioning the inner tubes, rendering them completely unrepairable!

Stockmen, too, detest the puncturevine for its often fatal results when expensive stock have unwittingly ingested the burrs in feed hay or in pasture.

It is interesting to note the structural mechanism of the puncturevine's seed. Its center of gravity lies in the thickest part of the seed, at the base between the two spurs or horns. Thus, when completely ripe, the seed drops to the ground, falling in either of two positions: one point up like a unicorn's horn—its most stable position, or, landing horns down. In this last unstable position, it is so constructed that the slightest touch will turn it horn up, ready for instant victim-impaling action.

The many loose seeds lying beneath the parent plant nearly always fall with one point up, which position allows the rest of the seed itself to become buried in the sand almost out of sight, but with that one all-important vicious barb barely above the surface. Thus the minimum of pressure allows it to instantly pierce its unsuspecting victim.

If you remember your early European history, you will recall the defense used against enemy cavalry by scattering "caltrops" over the ground to snag and injure oncoming enemy horsemen.

The dictionary defines *Caltrop* as: "An instrument with four iron point so disposed that any three of them being on the ground, the other projects upward."

Strange, is it not, to think that perhaps those early military strategists of the Mediterranean *might* have adopted their defense tactics from this humble, though vicious, vine-like plant.

However, regardless of its origin, the puncturevine, like its disagreeable cousin, the tumbling tumbleweed, or Russian thistle, is definitely an unwanted importee from the Old Country. Unfortunately, both these noxious, persistent, troublesome weeds are here to stay. ☐

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Salvador Canyon

ABANDONING THE mystic Badlands, our trail threads its way up Coyote Creek and Canyon into Collins Valley and the rugged San Ysidro Range, perhaps the most magnificent scenic region within the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Here, in the park's northwest corner, ribbons of talking water tumble through lush mountain palmeries colored

with the lore of Indian, Spaniard, homesteader and cattleman. Salvador Canyon and the South Fork of Sheep Canyon are the oases we'll explore on the rim of Collins Valley.

The Cahuilla Indians were occupying Coyote Canyon when the Spanish came. In 1772 Pedro Fages (pronounced "FAH-hays"), soldier, explorer and

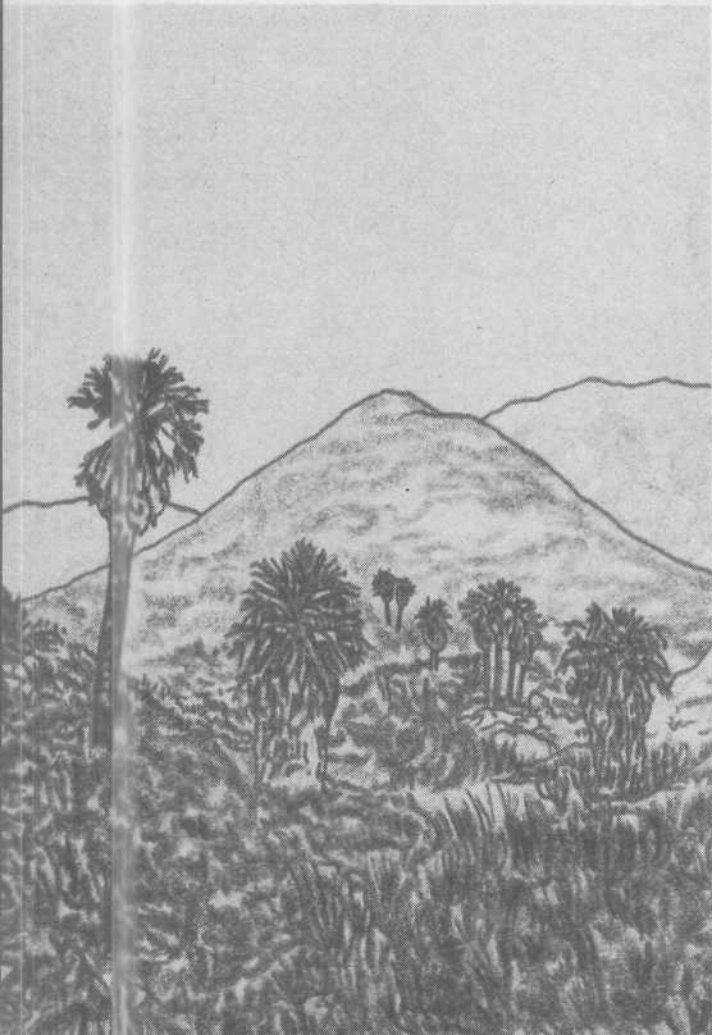
Governor of California from 1782 to 1791, became the first white man of historical record to traverse this well-watered rift between the San Ysidro and Santa Rosa ranges. Two years later, guided by the Indian, Sebastian Tarabal, Captain Juan Bautista de Anza passed this way, establishing an overland trail between Sonora and the fledgling Spanish settlements along the coast of Alta California. On a second trek, in 1775-76, Anza led 240 soldiers and settlers over the same route, the first colonists to reach California by land.

Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs is the jumping-off point for trips up Coyote Canyon. Pavement marks the first few miles as our route follows Palm Canyon Drive and Di Giorgio Road. Then a sandy dirt road leads farther northward. Four-wheel-drive and good clearance are recommended, but sometimes not needed, at the beginning of the dirt-road portion of the journey. "Recommended" gradually becomes "required," however, as the route proceeds up-canyon. Rocks, sand, narrow spots, and, finally, the water, mud, and rocks of Lower Willows make this a trip for backcountry rigs.

After traveling one-half mile through low sand dunes, we enter the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Three miles inside the park boundary, the road splashes through Coyote Creek, probably the best all-year stream of water in San Diego County. Anza's colonizing expedition camped not far from this spot late in December, 1775, crossing the creek at a place known as *El Vado* ("The Ford"). The trees and buildings off to

by
**DICK
BLOOMQUIST**

Salvador Canyon was named for Salvador Ygnacio Linares, born at nearby Upper Willows on Christmas Eve, 1775, with the second Anza expedition.



the left mark the former De Anza Ranch, homesteaded in 1909 by "Doc" Beaty, who also promoted the Truckhaven Trail across the Borrego Badlands.

Coyote Creek is forded again one mile to the north. Along the left side of the road just beyond the second crossing stands the "living fence," a huge square of ocotillo plants which some say was fashioned by the second Anza expedition as a corral for livestock. It probably dates from a later period. Ocotillo stalks take root and grow when cut off and planted.

Soon our route penetrates the dense growth of Lower Willows, where Coyote Creek is the road, and four-wheel-drive

and cholla and barrel cacti share the landscape with ruddy boulders here. Before long, however, we plunge into the dry creek bed. A tributary coming in from the left holds two clusters of Washingtonias which are visible in the distance.

Beyond this tributary a trickle of water suddenly appears in the main canyon. Then the palms begin, filling the gorge with cascades of buff and green. Salvador soon divides, with palms in both forks; I followed the rivulet into the left branch. At another fork not far ahead, water flows only in the right-hand channel, although here again the Washingtonias grow in both branches. Near this confluence a clutch of about 35 trees stands above the creek on the canyon's northern slope.

I turned back at this point after having hiked roughly one mile from the edge of the grove. I counted some 200 palms, a figure which included trees seen from afar as well as at close range. Judging by other accounts, the grand total for Salvador and its tributaries is probably between 400 and 500 Washingtonias. This oasis was once known as "Thousand Palms Canyon," a designation which not only exaggerated its size, but also echoed the name of another "Thousand Palms" in the Indio Hills. The present name honors Salvador Ygnacio Linares, born at nearby Upper Willows in Coyote Canyon on Christmas Eve, 1775, with the second Anza expedition. For many years he was believed to be the first white child born in Alta California. Salvador means "Saviour" in Spanish and is a common personal name.

Salvador Canyon is a moist, vigorous oasis. The palms, most of which wear ground-length fronds, stand dignified and aloof in their mountain fastness. The little stream gurgles over the rocks, flows placidly through patches of watercress, and nourishes a rich variety of other plant life. Mesquite, desert lavender, catsclaw, sage, arrow-weed, willow, desert apricot, mescal, buckwheat, juniper, sugar bush, and desert tea are some of the species seen on the floor or slopes of the gorge.

We move next to the South Fork of Sheep Canyon, which also drains into Collins Valley. It contains far fewer palms than Salvador, but compensates with delicate waterfalls and superb desert-mountain vegetation. □

Mileage Log

- 0.0 Christmas Circle in Borrego Springs. Drive east toward Salton Sea on Palm Canyon Drive (San Diego County Road S22).
- 0.5 Turn left on Di Giorgio Road.
- 5.2 Pavement ends. **Four-wheel-drive recommended from this point on.**
- 5.8 Enter Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.
- 8.9 Fork. Turn left, crossing Coyote Creek.
- 10.0 Cross Coyote Creek a second time.
- 10.1 "Living fence" of ocotillos parallels left side of road.
- 11.7 Road drops into Coyote Creek. Water, mud and rocks for next four-tenths of a mile as roadway winds through Lower Willows.
- 12.1 (Approximate mileage.) Roadway climbs left bank and leaves Coyote Creek.
- 12.5 (Approximate mileage.) Fork. Bear right. (Left branch leads to Sheep Canyon.)
- 13.5 (Approximate mileage.) Fork. Bear right.
- 15.0 (Approximate mileage.) Fork. Bear left.
- 15.7 (Approximate mileage.) Road ends at mouth of Salvador Canyon. The first palms are about one and one-quarter miles up the canyon at an elevation of perhaps 2100 feet.

is a necessity. After the wet, bumpy run through this dark willow "tunnel," we emerge into the sunshine of Collins Valley, named for early-day homesteader John Collins. Our goal, Salvador Canyon, now lies some three and one-half miles to the northwest on the flank of the San Ysidro Mountains.

From the end of the road at the mouth of Salvador it is an easy hike of one and one-quarter miles to the palms. At first the route winds through a desert rock garden above the arroyo; ocotillo, brittle-bush, chuparosa, creosote, burrobush,

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CALIFORNIA'S SUPER SNAKE



by BILL MACK

THE GOLD CAMPS of California's Mother Lode have fostered some mighty tall tales but few of them can match the report of a giant serpent which terrorized residents of Calaveras County.

Buried in the yellowing pages of early 1860 California newspapers, most of which are now defunct, are eyewitness reports of a giant serpent which was seen by a number of reportedly reputable people, including the no-nonsense manager of the Gwin mine. The miner, a Mr. W. P. Peek of Mokelumne Hill, was suitably jolted by the appearance of the giant serpent but recalled that its hissing was so loud he thought it was the sound of a brake on a wagon descending a hill. In Mr. Peek's words, the snake was "enormous." Although seen by several other people during the year, most particularly at Zanes Ranch in Spring Valley, reports dwindled off and nothing more was heard from this strange leviathan. Nothing more was heard that is, until 1878 when two thoroughly frighten-

ed Frenchmen burst into the office of Mr. Charles Higby, editor of the *Calaveras Chronicle*, and told their incredible story.

Mssrs. Buylck and Raud were partners in a charcoal business and close personal friends. The two men had taken a day off from their ovens and were hunting rabbits in the low foothills of the Sierra Nevada. According to the pair, their dog began to show signs of extreme fear, hair standing on its back and as reported in the *Chronicle*, "trembling from head to foot like an aspen leaf."

The gigantic serpent had crawled out of the brush into sight of both of the incredulous Frenchmen. Mr. Raud declared, "It was the most hideous, frightful monster." He is quoted as saying, "Its head was at least 18 inches across; its great hooked fangs were like talons of a vulture. The blood ran down my back, cold as Greenland ice, and congealed in my veins!"—which is pretty poetic for a man scared witless.

The two hunters further described the monster as having a belly that was cover-

ed with "transverse corrugations."

This was the last published report of the "Calaveras Constrictor" to appear in the *Chronicle*. The serpent, for reasons no doubt his own, disappeared from the Sierra scene. However, this is not the only report of a giant reptile on the West Coast. Residents of the peninsula of Baja California have, over a number of years, reported that there is *un cascabel grande* somewhere in the vicinity of San Quintin.

In 1973 I was a member of the privately financed Mesa Expedition to Mexico. In order to test our equipment, particularly the four-wheel-drive vehicles, we began our Mexican journey with a one week shakedown in Baja California, figuring, and rightly so, that if our equipment could take the pounding that Baja hands out, the rest of the trip to the Yucatan would be easy going. We made our headquarters at Meling Ranch, a working cattle ranch that provides accommodations for a few guests. The ranch was settled by a German family, the Melings, in the late 1800s, and one of

the pioneers, the doughty Bertie Meling, still lived on the ranch. Remembering the California snake story, I jokingly asked her if the reptile had any Mexican cousins and was jolted to hear her reply.

Said Bertie, "Yes, there is a story around here of a giant rattlesnake, often seen by vaqueros in the old days. As a child I remember being shown its tracks. It looked as if a barrel had been rolled across the desert, and for all I know that may have been what it was. The local people (of whom there are few) are insistent that it was the track of the giant rattlesnake of Baja California." Did Bertie believe? This doughty old lady just smiled.

Subsequent inquiries among the Mexican inhabitants of the region were somewhat negative. One of the oldtimers recalls that his father had spoken of a giant snake, but most of the ranchers in the immediate vicinity knew nothing of the story.

It is not inconceivable to me that the Alta Californians did see a very large snake. The first reports are given in the 1860s, some 20 years after the major gold rushes in to the Golden State. A great many of the miners who plied their trade in the bonanza country were South Americans. It is quite possible that one of these Latins brought a boa, most probably quite small, as a mascot or pet. It if escaped, or was released, it is not entirely improbable that it could have lived in the temperate foothills. Plenty of its cousins, the Sierra rattlers, certainly do. The enormous size of the reported snake could be attributed to the normal growth of the snake and to the fright of the witnesses, all of whom were familiar with "big rattlers" of five or six feet but lost their perspective on sighting a constrictor that could have easily been 15 feet long. As for the Mexican rattler, it was probably as Bertie Meling reasoned, a few vaqueros rolling a barrel (probably

full—at the start at least) across the dusty wasteland to frighten a little girl from wandering too far from her ranch home. However, if it is a reality, the Baja traveler is advised to carry a snake bite kit with suction kits as big as buckets.

For any of you who think that Mr. Gwin, one of the first sighters of the giant snake, wasn't a real hardnose, the following item was found during my search. It comes from "The History of Merced County," published in 1881 by Elliot and Moore of San Francisco. In a facsimile of a newspaper page I found the following ad.

"Runaway, or went off without leave, from my rancho, Louis Devron, a bull-headed Frenchman, on the night of the 28th ultimo. Any person returning the said Louis Devron to me in irons, will be entitled to a reward of 25 cents. Snelling, May 9, 1863/S.R. Gwin."

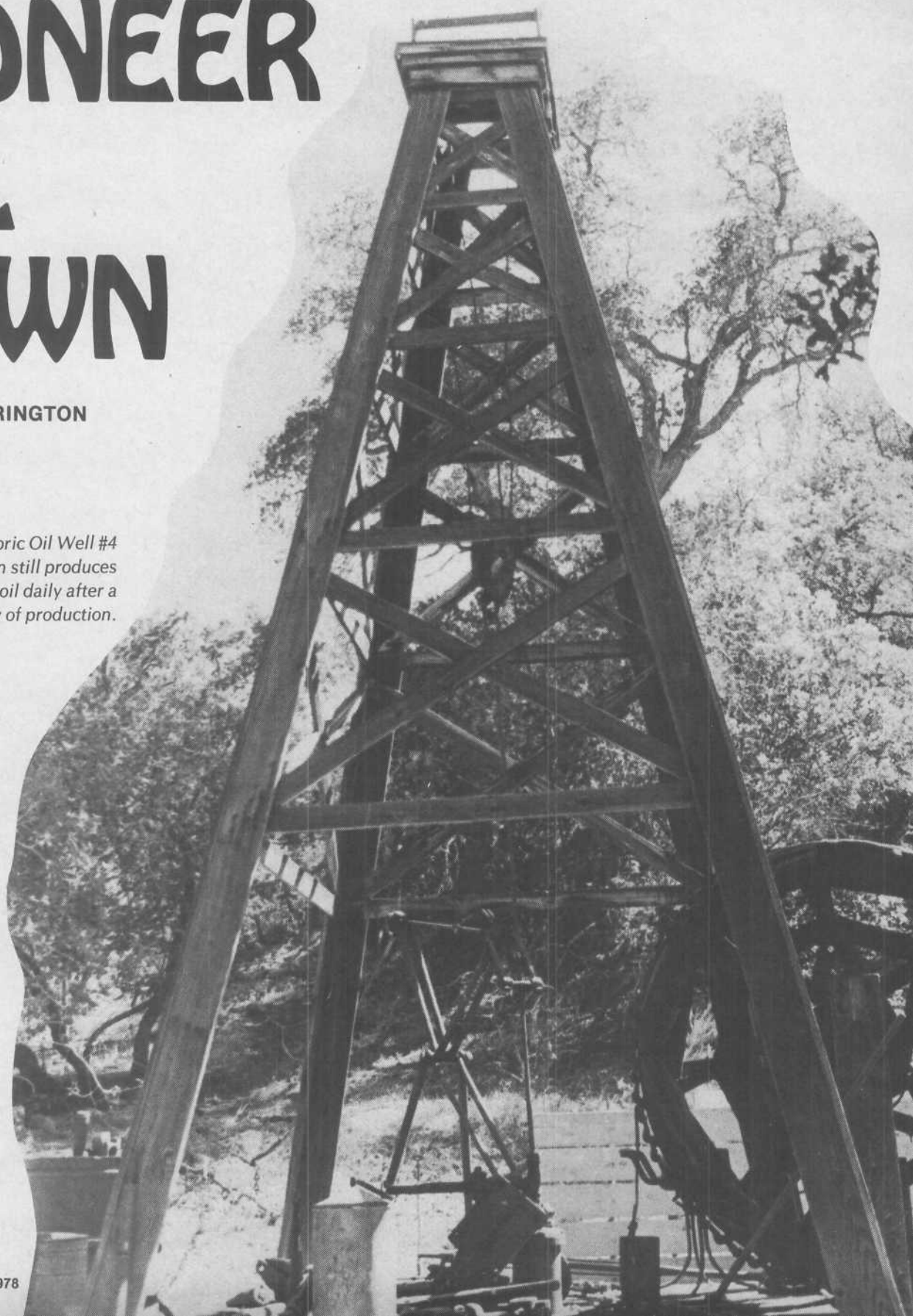
He may have seen snakes, but he was a close man with a buck. □



CALIFORNIA'S PIONEER OIL TOWN

by MARIE HARRINGTON

*Historic Oil Well #4
in Pico Canyon still produces
some oil daily after a
century of production.*



WHAT AND where is Mentryville?" is a question being asked by many people these days. Located in Pico Canyon, just four miles west of Highway 5 and seven miles west of Newhall, this spot on the southwest edge of the Mojave Desert is the site of California's first commercial oil-producing wells.

The site itself dates back to prehistoric Indian times when the natives came from great distances to obtain the sticky substance oozing from the ground for use as a caulking and binding material and also for its medicinal value. Don Andres Pico, in the years he lived at San Fernando Mission, brought back the crude oil for lamps and experimented with refining it. He became a part owner of the Los Angeles Petroleum Refining Company which in turn became the Star Oil Works in 1875. A year later it was known as the California Star Oil Works and finally became the Standard Oil Company of California in 1906. And between the years there has been a lot of history.

In 1875, a young Frenchman, C. A. "Alex" Mentry, a veteran of the Titusville oil fields, came to this desert country. He looked at the wells which Sanford Lyons had punched down by spring-pole method at the head of Pico Canyon (named for the redoubtable Don Andres). He decided to take out a lease. Others, including Colonel R. S. Baker and C. D. Scott had already obtained leases from Lyons. Three wells were punched down,

No. 3 proving to be dry. They managed to obtain six barrels of oil daily. Well No. 4 was drilled in 1876 and proved to be a bonanza. At a 300-foot depth, 30 barrels of oil per day were produced. It is believed that the first steam rig ever employed in California was used here when No. 4 was deepened to 617 feet in 1876; it proved to be the first commercially productive well in the state. The man responsible for drilling this well was young Mentry.

The success of this early well led to the construction of the state's first oil refinery just south of the town of Newhall. The work on well No. 4 was financed by D. C. Scofield who later became the first president of the new Standard Oil Company of California. Both state and federal plaques are now located at the well which is still producing oil.

Alex Mentry first lived in nearby Placerita Canyon, but later decided to move nearer his work and before he knew it, a town sprang up which was to bear his name with the "ville" added on to it. This would not prove to be a rough and ready oil town, but a town of 100 families, most of them from the East. They brought their culture and a certain amount of elegance with them and today the artifacts being unearthed such as cut glass, china and the like, tell of an elegant way of life in this secluded oak-covered setting.

The homes, built mostly of redwood,

were both heated and lighted by gas which came from a nearby gas well. Gas is still used for heat at Mentryville. The settlement boasted a blacksmith shop, a bakery which supplied Newhall with bread and pastries, a large barn for the mules which hauled the wagons and across the creek, a boiler house and wash house where the ladies of the town adjourned to have the luxury of hot running water for their washday sessions. A stagecoach arrived from Newhall twice daily and the walkway leading up to the Mentry House is still intact—passengers stepped from the stage right on to the walkway so as not to get their shoes dusty.

Alex Mentry built his large 13-room Victorian house in 1880. His laboratory was located at the rear of the house and there he carried on many experiments. A large wine cellar, high-ceilinged rooms upstairs and down—this was the epitome of gracious living.

A little schoolhouse, named the Felton Elementary School in honor of Senator Charles N. Felton who visited the site many times, was constructed in 1885 and continued until 1932. There are teachers who taught at the Felton School 60 years ago who still return for an annual meeting with ex-pupils. Life for the school marm must have been on the grim side. Although she had her living quarters in the Mentry home, she was not allowed to eat with the family or to use the parlor.

*Victorian house
built by Alex Mentry
in 1880 and also
restored by Frenchy
and Carol Lagasse
even to the walkway at
the side of the steps
for the convenience of
stagecoach
passengers.*





*Felton
Elementary
School
[1885-1932].
Restored in 1976
by Frenchy and
Carol Lagasse.*

She also was expected to take the children on weekend "nature walks." A list of rules posted on the wall of the schoolroom states that she was to wash the classroom daily with soap and water; she was not to wear bloomers for cycling nor a slit in her skirt to show her ankles. Also, her bustle must not extend over 10 inches. As to rules of conduct, causes for instant dismissal were smoking of cigarettes, use of spirits, frequenting dance halls and joining any feminist movement such as suffragettes. "Marriage or other unseemly behavior by women teachers" was also on the list.

However, the little schoolhouse became the social center for Saturday night dances and other social gatherings until a recreation hall was built nearby. It is told that the large number of sarsaparilla bottles found around Mentryville was due to the fact that liquor was banned. One had to travel the seven miles east to Newhall if he desired strong refreshment.

From the turn of the century up to about 1920, Mentryville went its way but decline gradually set in and families began to move to other spots. Most of them literally took their houses with them due to the scarcity of lumber and it is told that many a house in Newhall was constructed from an ex-Mentryville home. By the late 1960s all that remained of the once-flourishing town was the rundown Alex Mentry home, the almost ruined little schoolhouse, the barn and small chicken house next to it. So it was until 1967 that French Lagasse, longtime employee and a field superintendent for the oil company, his wife Carol and their three daughters came to this almost-abandoned site. With the permission of Standard Oil Company, owner of the 852 Pico Canyon acres, the Lagasses began restoration of the Alex Mentry house. It was a long labor of love and took careful restoration work. Even the dumbwaiter, which went from the cellar to the large kitchen, was put back in working order.

All of this work, as well as the refurnishing of the house in Victorian and early 1900s decor, was paid for by the Lagasses.

As their Bi-Centennial tribute, Frenchy and Carol undertook the restoration of the little schoolhouse. Marbles, wood blocks and the like were found as the work progressed. Some names on the dado below the pegs where the children hung their coats are still fairly visible. Friends gladly helped with donations and work parties. The restoration was completed for the September 26, 1976 centennial party for Pico No. 4. It was a happy day not only for the oil company officials and friends present, but for the Lagasses. Prominent on the scene were costumed docents from the Newhall Women's Club who now give tours of the historic area.

Further honors came on October 8, 1977 when Mentryville was declared California Registered Historical Landmark No. 516-2. Again, a gala affair was held in the old canyon and a time capsule was placed within the new monument of native stone, designed and built by the redoubtable Frenchy.

Due to Mentryville being private property, it is closed to the public but groups are welcome for a tour by contacting the Standard Oil Company at Newhall or the Lagasses. □



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BISBEE

Continued from Page 31

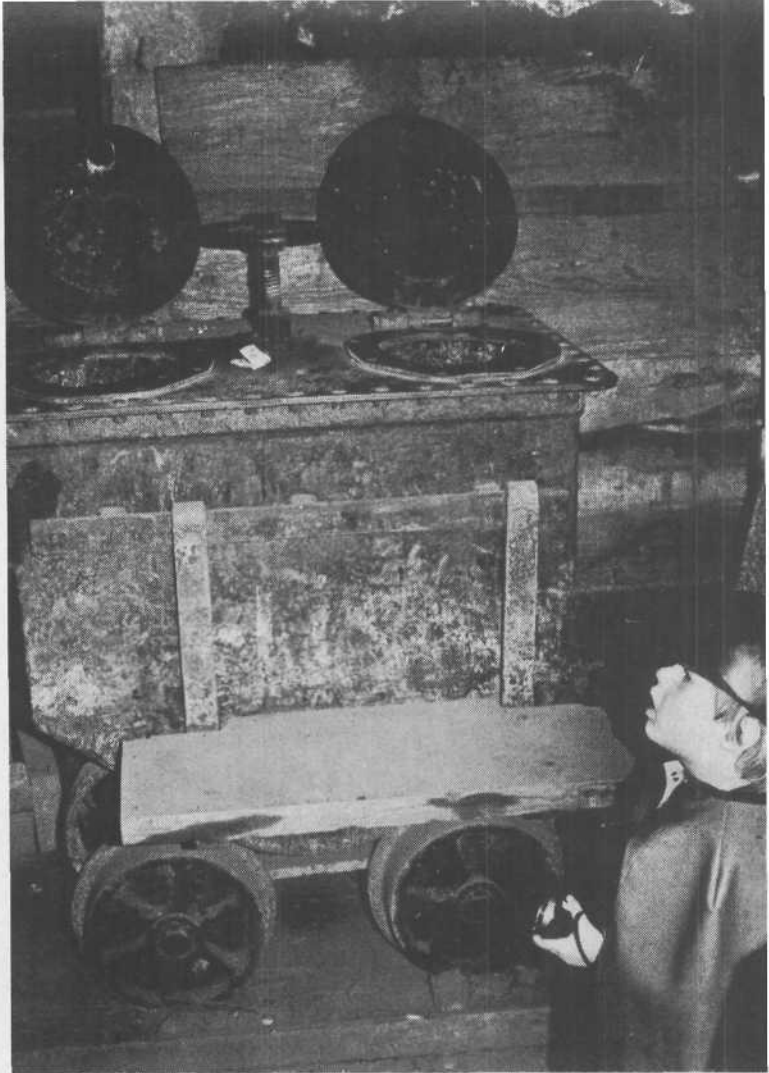
owner. The hotel was owned by Phelps Dodge until 1971 when it was sold to Steve Hutchinson who sold it to Rick Hort. The Horts are antique buffs and have resolved to stick to the authenticity of the hotel's heyday. Today it not only attracts Arizonans who want to leave hot Phoenix for cooler, higher Bisbee, but also out-of-staters who are interested in the history of the Old West. It is, after all, the original place to stay to see the town and the mines of Bisbee, the neighboring ghost towns, the Chiricahua Mountains, the Coronado National Forest, and the Cochise Stronghold in the Dragoon Mountains—all conveniently close by.

In Bisbee, two mines are open to visitors; the Queen Mine is definitely the more exciting. After the mines' closing, miners and other townspeople helped by the cooperation of the "Company," the town of Bisbee and the Economic Development Association worked for months to clear one of the old tunnels and retimber the old workings. The tour is an 1800-foot walk straight into the old Queen. There are exhibits of early and later mining machinery along the way. It's a cold 47 degrees inside, and everyone wears hard hats, yellow slickers and carries a battery-driven light. You ride out on the old mining cars. It's fun and not commercial; the guides are experienced miners; you don't have to be 12 to enjoy it.

The Lavender Pit, built in 1951, is also open, but there is no way you could miss it from Highway 80. The pit covers 300 acres and was mined on 50-foot benches or levels. The Company has provided numerous holes of various sizes and angles in the fencing so that photographing the pit is easy. The scope of the pit's operation is overwhelming—after they reached the edge of the old Sacramento pit, they bought it, dug through it and part way through the adjoining town of Lowell. The Lavender Pit looks like a super amphitheater for a colossal space movie.

The old General Office Building for Phelps Dodge has been declared a National Historic Site and now houses the Bisbee Council of Arts and Humanities and an excellent mining museum.

Small boy on Queen Mine tour inspects "two holer" on rails. The tour goes 1800 feet into the mountain.



More important, they have a mimeographed walking tour of Bisbee—get it. It tells you exactly where to look up to see the Glory Hole: once the main entrance for underground mining, it also served as a refuge for the women and children when threatened by an Apache raid.

The Phelps Dodge Library on the second floor of the Post Office building also has a large collection of early photographs and newspapers of interest to history buffs.

And don't miss Brewery Gulch. Its sidewalks are four steps up from the street to allow the torrents from summer flash floods to rush right down, stopping traffic, but not doing much damage to the houses and shops. The brewery is closed now; most of the shops are too; those left are often run by young artisans who arrived after many of the miners had been relocated by the Company. However, many are not just wandering through, they have stayed four or five years, and are a definite voting part of the community.

What is Bisbee today? It's a mixture of

some 8000 souls. The older residents want to attract retired folks, probably from Ft. Huachuca about 25 miles west. And some have come. The young want to attract more artists—but to do this you must open profitable galleries. Most people we talked to thought a regular, old hometown would be fine. Remember that great clime; it's still a mile high. □

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What's Cooking on the Desert?



by STELLA HUGHES

Leather Britches

TIMES ARE CHANGING! And, not always for the better. As food prices rise, the average housewife finds it costs an arm and a leg to supply a family's daily needs of fresh fruits and vegetables. Some have found the answer in planting more and more small garden plots; backyard, vacant lot, or community efforts on rented or leased land. There are more home gardeners in America today, than during World War II, when millions answered the call to grow more food by planting "Victory" gardens.

Fuel shortages, high prices and a belated sense of needing to preserve our natural resources have made many of us pause to take stock. We are reconsidering some of the old fashioned methods used by the pioneers. Witness the tremendous surge of home canning being done today by modern housewives. Shortages of jars and sealing lids are proof of this. Thousands of wood-burning stoves have been resurrected, and stove companies are a year behind in filling orders. Fireplaces are almost a must in new homes being built today, and kerosene lamps and candles are popular, partially replacing useless burning of electric lights. The list is long, and growing longer each day. Take food drying for instance.

After your jars have been filled, the freezer lid bulging, and the neighbors refusing to answer their door when they see you coming with baskets of surplus produce from your prolific garden, it's time to think of food drying.

Now, don't make the mistake of thinking dried food inferior or even second rate to other kinds of food. Nothing could be further from the truth. Flavor, and many of the best food elements are preserved, and drying gives many foods a unique flavor all its own.

Putting away dried food makes sense, and no expensive or hard-to-find means of storage are needed. To the city dweller the drying of vegetables and fruits has special advantages, even though she has no garden. During the season when the market is oversupplied, and prices are down (I didn't say low), it is time to lay in a stock, dry it, and store for winter use, without taking up much storage space.

I think the strongest point in connec-

tion with drying of food is its so durned easy to do! Anything you can grow can be dried.

There are several simple ways of drying food, from electric or gas ovens, (commercial or homemade) airblast, using electric fans, and sun drying. Being dwellers of the southwest, we will consider the simplest and cheapest method of all, sun drying.

Sun drying is done by spreading the slices or pieces of food on sheets of paper, lengths of muslin, or trays made of wire screen, and exposed to the sun. Days need to be bright and hot, with the air free of moisture. Here in the southwest, we probably have more days that suit these requirements than any other place in the country. Late September and early October are mostly ideal for sun drying.

After the food is on the drying racks, care must be taken to provide protection from rain or dew. Just before sunset the fruit or vegetables should be taken indoors overnight. There should be a covering of cheesecloth to protect from flies, moths or other insects that may deposit their eggs on the food, and when the eggs hatch the food could be spoiled.

Dried sweet corn and dried string beans are two of the many foods that have a wide popularity, partly because they are so easily grown, but mostly because both make such good eatin'. Sweet corn, when simmered for several hours, butter added, has a nut-like flavor uniquely its own, as do string beans, commonly called "leather britches." Dried string beans, or pole beans, when traditionally boiled with a juicy ham-bone, makes a dish that is more than superb! It is a far cry from the insipid taste of commercially canned string beans.

While drying vegetables is not at all complicated, it's necessary to know some of the ground rules. For example, most vegetables should be heated in boiling water (called blanching) before drying. You will need a large kettle containing a gallon of boiling water for each pound of vegetables to be blanched. The food is put into a wire basket and immersed in the boiling water for the required time. Then plunge into cold water for a few moments, then spread out on paper towels to pat dry. This stops the ripening process, helps prevent color changes, and speeds up drying by softening the tissues.

Desert/October 1978

Leather Britches

The best pole beans for drying are Blue Lake or Kentucky Wonders. Select fully grown, yet tender beans. Cut off stem and tip, blanch five minutes in boiling water, then plunge into very cold water; pat dry. Then thread a large embroidery needle with nylon or heavy duty thread, double thickness. Tie a good non-slip knot to first bean, then string 'em on like you would a necklace. Do enough for one good meal, plus a few more. Tie the last bean on the string securely. Hang where there is hot, dry air circulating or place in full sun. Car ports are fine, as are attics. If outside, protect with cheesecloth. Beans are ready to store when crisp and brittle.

Prepare string beans as follows: remove from string, and soak overnight. The next day boil slowly for three hours. An hour before supper, add a hamhock, or chunks of bacon or salt pork, slivers of

too close to the cob. Then with the back of the knife blade, thoroughly scrape the cob to get out all the milk and kernel hearts. Spread out evenly in trays and place in the sun. Stir each day to assure drying evenly. Corn is ready for storing when it is dry and brittle, which is about six days. A dozen ears will make approximately one pound. Then "season" by placing all the dried corn in an old pillow case or porous bag, and hang on the clothesline. Every time you go by, punch it, or shake it up, for the next week. Then store in airtight containers, such as plastic jars, bags, or glass and tin containers.

Prepare dried corn by soaking in water overnight. Two cups of corn to four cups of water. Do not drain. Add a teaspoon of salt, one tablespoon of sugar and pepper to taste. Cover and cook slowly until the kernels are tender. Add butter.

Besides being eaten plain, dried corn can be used in soups, chowders, omelets



Leather Britches pole beans, strung on string and sun dried.

onion, salt and pepper. Serve with slabs of cornbread.

Dried Sweet Corn

From the time the corn is picked, it is a rush to get it drying before it loses any of its goodness. First, carefully select only young and tender ears. Husk and de-silk it, but do not break off the last bit of stump-end close to the ear. Nor do you need break off the tip-end. The stump serves as a good hand-hold, and the tip is a good rest, when cutting the corn from the cob.

After ears are clean, first plunge into boiling water for five to seven minutes to set the milk in the kernels; then into cold water. After the corn has cooled, cut the kernels off the cob, using a sharp knife to cut downward, being careful not to cut

or mixed with other vegetables.

Any person seriously wanting to learn more about drying of fruits and vegetables may obtain information by writing or calling the Extension Home Economist in your county, or write to the nearest university in your state, addressing your letter to Cooperative Extensive Service. Or write to U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Divisions of Publications, Washington, D.C. 20250.

The *Desert Magazine* Book Shop has an excellent new book on the subject by Don and Myrtle Holm, called "Food Drying, Pickling and Smoke Curing." The book is delightfully easy reading, covering all you need to know about drying food at home. It is well illustrated and gives recipes for cooking dried food.

BAJA BY CANOE

Continued from Page 15

plastic water jugs were punctured by tooth marks and, adding insult to injury, the coffee pot was missing. It seemed clear that this was the work of a coyote with a vendetta against gringos.

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Another camp will long be remembered as the place where we thought we had lost the canoes. We were returning from an all-day hike into the interior and, as we drew closer to camp, there was no sign of the canoes. It seemed obvious that they had been swept out to sea and the grim prospects of such a catastrophe flashed through our minds. A hurried investigation disclosed, however, that a high tide had only pushed the boats a little further into the estuary where we had left them for safe keeping.

Twenty-one days out of Puertecitos we reached the town of Mulege where it had been decided that our trip would end. Friends, who had been alerted by a telephone call, would drive down the peninsula and pick us up in a few more days. Mulege was a perfect setting for the completion of our voyage. The little town is situated on the banks of a river which rises out of the Mexican desert to flow into the Gulf of California. An atmosphere of tropical lushness is enhanced by tall, graceful palm trees which line both sides of the slowly flowing river and dense thickets of mangroves grow to the water's edge. As we cruised up river looking for a place to camp, herons and egrets took to wing in front of the canoes and we waved at passing fishermen going out to sea in their trim pangas.

A neat, attractive trailer park, appropriately named Oasis Rio Baja, caught our eye and we set up camp beneath the palm trees on the river bank. Hot water showers and restrooms were near at hand and there, midst all this luxury, we waited for the arrival of our friends, Paul and Marge Schessler of Borrego Springs. The Schesslers made their appearance in a few days and were closely followed by Patchen's son Mike and his friend Greg who had driven down to transport the canoes back to California.

So, our trip was over and it was time to return to home and job. Still we lingered another day or two. Concepcion Bay was just a few miles south and we drove there to swim in the warm, clear water and search the sandy beaches for sea shells. On our final night in Mulege we steamed a great bucket of clams and feasted like gypsy kings on the succulent sea food dipped in melted butter with side orders of refried beans wrapped in corn tortillos. It was a night to remember and a fitting way to commemorate our wonderful Baja California adventure. □

SPIRAL STAIRCASE

Continued from Page 7

surrounding regions. The carpenter had no wood when he arrived at the convent and he bought no wood from lumber suppliers in Santa Fe. Even if he had, they certainly had no wood of this type. And even experts today are unsure of where the wood might have come from.

After three months of confining himself to the chapel, the carpenter once again knocked on the convent door and asked Mother Magdelilne to come to the chapel and see his creation.

In her diary, she wrote that she was overcome with joy at seeing the spiral staircase, and she hurried off to call the other nuns to come and see it.

When they returned the staircase was still there, but the crusty old carpenter, along with the donkey and tools, was gone. It was as if he'd vanished.

Mother Magdeline instituted a search for the old carpenter. She wanted to pay him for his months of labor. The town of Santa Fe was searched as was the surrounding areas. Not a soul could recall having seen an old man and a donkey, either before or after he started the staircase. A reward was offered for information as to who he was and where he'd gone. No one ever claimed the reward.

They might have found him had they known his name, but he never shared that information with the nuns, or apparently anybody else. But the nuns who were in Santa Fe at the time felt he was more than human. They were convinced their prayers had been answered by St. Joseph, literally. They believed that he had himself come to their aid. And there are those who believe it today.

They point to his timely arrival, just after completion of the novena. They point to his mysterious and secretive months in the chapel, working alone. They point to the strange tools, his instant disappearance immediately after the staircase was revealed. And of course they point to the unusual wood used in its construction and the the fact that it shouldn't be standing but is.

Be he saint or simply woodworking genius, the staircase is a testimony to his mechanical and woodworking expertise. It may not be a genuine miracle, but the spiral staircase is definitely a wonder to behold. □

Letters to the Editor

Letters requesting answers must
include stamped self-addressed envelope

Dad Did It All . . .

It was with much pleasure that I discovered Mr. Harold O. Weight's article "Emigrant Springs and The Lost Gunsight" in the August issue of your magazine. He referred frequently to the late James B. Nossner, Justice of the Peace for Kern County's 10th Judicial (Randsburg) Township—my father.

As Mr. Weight implies, Dad was first and foremost a miner—he lived, loved, studied and pursued it. He experienced few real successes and many failures along the way but he struggled and through it all he was his own man, a miner. Mining history—past and present—were relived enthusiastically with countless other prospectors and miners along the way. Dad learned it all—from riding shotgun with railroad ore shipments to San Francisco to geology, prospecting, surveying, legal papers/bookkeeping, leasing, drilling, setting charges, mucking, hoisting, milling (he even built one) and assaying—he did it all. When strikes were few we lived from milling to milling and Teagles Store in Johannesburg staked our food bill from milling to milling.

Some of us, like myself, who have shared a part of that life, somehow feel that much of the flavor is gone from the miner of today—somehow men like my Dad were a rare species. In the end, the hard work, dust and bad air also took his life, but even if he could have foreseen the outcome, I cannot picture him more fittingly in any other role. Much of their life and history is no longer remembered, so an article such as Mr. Weight's carries a special significance to my mother and her family.

My appreciation to Mr. Weight and to the editors of *Desert Magazine*.

MRS. VAUGHN CORBRIDGE,
Ridgecrest, California.

More on Jerky . . .

My sole reason for writing is to tell you how much I was amused by the dead mule jerky recollection of C. T. Garrett in the August issue of *Desert Magazine*.

Nothing was wasted in early times. My father told me of when he was a kid about 1890. He was hired to take a band of sheep to the high Sierras for the summer. Coyotes were bad and after shooting a young sheep killer, Dad stewed the haunches for his dogs.

Desert/October 1978

Calendar of Events

This column is a public service and there is no charge for listing your event or meeting—so take advantage of the space by sending in your announcement. We must receive the information at least three months prior to the event.

OCTOBER 3-15, The Fresno Gem and Mineral Society, Inc., presents their 25th Annual Show at the Fresno Dist. Fair, Industrial Arts Building at the Fairgrounds located at East Kings Canyon Road and Chance Ave., Fresno, Calif. Admission to Fair covers admission to show.

OCTOBER 6-NOVEMBER 24, Arizona Outlaw Film Festival presented by the Arizona Historical Society. Films shown every Friday at 7:30 p.m., AHS auditorium, 949 East Second Street, Tucson, Arizona. Films from 1934 to 1971, with a different guest speaker introducing the films each week.

OCTOBER 7 & 8, the World-of-Rockhounds annual meeting, in the Hackberry Mountains. Take the Goffs road Exit north 10 miles, make a sharp turn left on to Landfair Road, continue about 9 miles to the WRA camp. Field trips, auction, campfire Saturday evening.

OCTOBER 7 & 8, Mohave County Gemstones 8th Annual Gem and Mineral Show. Mohave County Fairgrounds, Kingman, Ariz. Dealers. Chairman: John Sourek, Kingman, Arizona 86402.

OCTOBER 7 & 8, Searles Lake Gem and Mineral Society's 37th annual Gem-O-Rama, Recreation Hall, Trona, Calif. Camping, field trips, dealer space filled.

OCTOBER 7 & 8, "Back Country Arts Festival" sponsored by the Community United Methodist Church of Julian, California. Show to be held at the church. Admission free.

OCTOBER 7 & 8, Bisbee Mineral Show of 1978, National Guard Armory, south of Bisbee, Arizona near the junction of Naco Highway and Highway 92. Exceptional displays, special programs. Admission \$1.00, children with adults free.

OCTOBER 13-15, Tucson Lapidary & Gem Show sponsored by the Old Pueblo Lapidary Club, Tucson Community Center Exhibition Hall, 350 South Church St., Tucson, Arizona. Exhibits, dealers, demonstrations. Admission \$1.00 - children under 12 free with adult.

Before leaving camp for the day, he added a layer of dumplings.

When he returned at night, he found his boss had arrived, packing in needed supplies. First thing, the man said, "Say, I filled up on that fine stew you made, but I sure couldn't figure out what kind of meat was in it."

MRS. LENORA P. GILKEY,
Corcoran, California.

OCTOBER 14 & 15, Kern Valley Historical Society's annual Antique and Collectables Show, Auditorium of Kernville Elementary School, Kernville, California. No admission. Private collections and some commercial collections will be on display.

OCTOBER 14 & 15, Annual Show "Rock Trails West" sponsored by the Campbell Gem and Mineral Guild, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, San Jose, California. Dealers. Chairman, Ralph Quain, Box 552, Los Gatos, California 95030.

OCTOBER 14-22, 3rd Annual Gem and Mineral and Handcraft Hobby Show, Sportsman's Club of Joshua Tree, 6225 Sunburst, Joshua Tree, California. For information, write P. O. Box 153, Joshua Tree, Calif. 92252.

OCTOBER 21 & 22, Insulator, Bottle and Collectable Show, Kern County Fairgrounds, Bakersfield, California. Entrance on South "P" St. Free parking. RV hook-up-\$3.50 per day.

OCTOBER 21 & 22, Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society Tourmaline Gemshow. Fallbrook High School Cafeteria, South Mission, Fallbrook, California. Dealers.

OCTOBER 28 & 29, 23rd Annual October Gem-Fest held by the Lockheed Employees Recreation Club Rockcrafters, in the L.E.R.C. Building, 2814 Empire Avenue, Burbank, Calif. Dealers, demonstrations, exhibits.

OCTOBER 28 & 29, Convair Rockhounds' Annual Show; 1978 San Diego County Gemshow, "Earth's Hidden Treasures." Al Bahr Shrine Temple, 5440 Kearny Mesa Rd., San Diego, California. Retail Dealers and Wholesale Room. Programs scheduled daily.

OCTOBER 28 & 29, 5th Annual Los Angeles Antique Bottles & Collectables Show and Sale, Hawthorne Memorial Center, 3901 W. El Segundo Blvd., Hawthorne, Calif. Admission \$1.00; children under 12 free.

NOVEMBER 4 & 5, NRC Gem and Mineral Club's 4th Annual Treasure Chest of Gems. 1834 W. Valencia Dr., Fullerton, California. Contact Vic Crawford, 1679 Low Lane, Chino, California 91710 for information.

NOVEMBER 4 & 5, annual "Wonderful Weekend in Twentynine Palms," Twentynine Palms, California, at the Junior High School on Utah Trail, and the Art Gallery on Cottonwood Drive. Combines Gem and Mineral Show, Weed and Flower Show, Smorgasbord, Art Show and other activities. Free admission to exhibits and free parking.



"Flowering Dunes"

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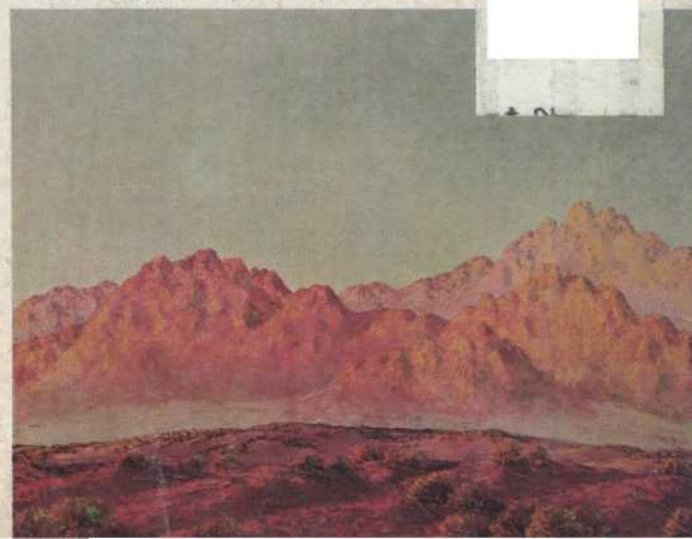
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